

COUNTRY LIFE

THE JOURNAL FOR ALL INTERESTED IN
COUNTRY LIFE AND COUNTRY PURSUITS. ILLUSTRATED.

VOL. VII.—No. 169. [REGISTERED AT THE
G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER.] SATURDAY, MARCH 31st, 1900.

[PRICE SIXPENCE.
BY POST, 6d.]



Photo. by

R. JOHNSON.

MISS BOURKE.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Our Frontispiece: Miss Bourke	385, 388
Sport on the Siberian Railway	386
Country Notes	387
A Picturesque Devonshire Hamlet. (Illustrated)	389
On the Green	392
Country Life in a Corner of the Venetian Alps. (Illustrated)	392
Deer-stalking in the Highlands. (Illustrated)	394
Why do birds Sing?	395
From Pig-sticking to Bloemfontein. (Illustrated)	396
John Charity: A Romance of Yesterday	397
In the Garden. (Illustrated)	399
Gardens Old and New: Blaise Castle. (Illustrated)	400
Books of the Day	404
The Duchess of Newcastle's Letters. (Illustrated)	405
Ultima Thule.—IV. (Illustrated)	407
O'er Field and Furrow	410
Racing Notes	410
Ringed Plover. (Illustrated)	411
At the Theatre: "Twelfth Night," "Floradora"	412
A Giant Cactus. (Illustrated)	413
Literary Notes	413
The Hedgehog at Home. (Illustrated)	414
Correspondence	415

EDITORIAL NOTICE.

The Editor will be glad to receive for consideration photographs, instantaneous or otherwise, besides literary contributions, in the shape of articles and descriptions, as well as short stories, sporting or otherwise, not exceeding 2,000 words. Contributors are specially requested to place their names and addresses on their MSS., and on the backs of photographs. The Editor will not be responsible for the return of artistic or literary contributions which he may not be able to use, and the receipt of a proof must not be taken as evidence that an article is accepted. Publication in COUNTRY LIFE alone will be recognised as acceptance. Where stamps are enclosed, the Editor will do his best to return those contributions which he does not require.

With regard to photographs, the price required for reproduction, together with all descriptive particulars, must be plainly stated. If it is desired that the photographs should be returned, a sufficiently stamped and directed envelope must be enclosed for the purpose.

It must be distinctly understood that no one will be treated with who is not the owner of the copyright of the photograph submitted, or who has not the permission in writing of the owner of the copyright to submit the photograph to the Editor of COUNTRY LIFE for reproduction.

Vols. V. and VI. of COUNTRY LIFE are now ready, and can be obtained on application to the Publisher. Price, bound in green half-morocco, 25s. per volume, or 21s. in green cloth, gilt edges. Vols. I., II., III., and IV. are out of print. All cheques should be made payable to the Proprietors, COUNTRY LIFE.

. On account of the regulations of the Postal Authorities, the index to Vol. VI. of COUNTRY LIFE is not included in the body of the paper, but it will be forwarded free to subscribers by the Manager upon the receipt of a stamped and addressed wrapper.

The charge for small Advertisements of Property for Sale or to Let, Situations Wanted, etc., etc., is 5s. for 40 words and under, and 1s. for each additional 10 words or less. All orders must be accompanied by a remittance, and all matters relating to Advertisements should be addressed to the Manager, 20, Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, W.C.

SPORT ON THE . . . SIBERIAN RAILWAY.

THE latest news from Central Asia is that the last section but one of the Great Siberian Railway has been finished and opened from Lake Baikal to the river Amur. Four thousand miles of line, dividing the forests of the north from the steppes and mountains of the south, and joining the west with the far east, are now available for ordinary travellers and for English sportsmen, and a few more years will see the last section of the line built, up the Amur Valley to Vladivostok, and down through the Manchurian forests and valleys to the coast of North China.

From the point of view of sport this is the most promising enterprise yet undertaken in opening up new countries. The Uganda Railway gives access to regions where game is thicker, but the dimensions of the two areas respectively accessible are

not in any sense comparable. The Siberian Railway gives access to two-thirds of the whole of Asia. The hunting grounds which can be reached from it are practically illimitable, and game, scenery, and sport are varied, interesting, and in some instances unique.

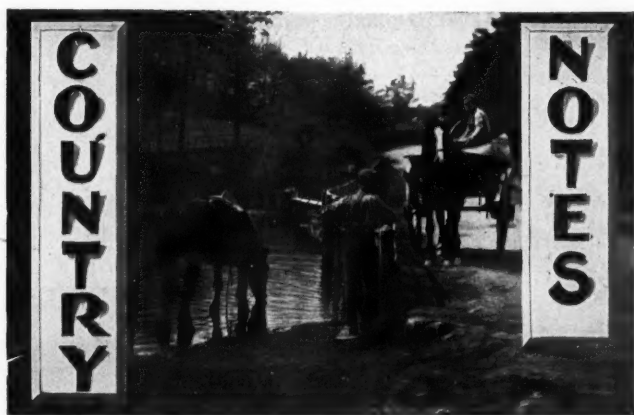
The Maral stags of the southern mountains and south-eastern forests are only exceeded in size by the wapiti. The long-haired tigers which swarm in the Amur Valley are the finest trophies of any carnivora, and there is almost no form of large game of the temperate regions, from seals on the inland lakes to wild sheep on the mountain-tops, which is not represented in this undeveloped inheritance of the Czar. The old belief that it is a vast icy wilderness is beginning to give way to facts. But there is still a very general notion that Russian Asia is mainly frozen steppe and pine forest. Yet the southern limit is in the latitude of Palermo, and the southern mountains much resemble the Alps. Practically there are three regions in which sport and travel can be enjoyed below the great northern forest, and to each of these the railway gives a starting point and base. The fringe of the forest, which stretches from the Urals to the sea, is the most northern and nearest to the line. Here the woods merge into steppe, beautiful park-like scenery is common, and the beasts of the forest, as they always do, draw out to the grass and sun. The belt is not wide, and often broken by lakes or steppe. But the steppe flowers and shrubs mingle with the birch and pine, and mountain ash and cherry, bluebells, hellebore, and spiræas make a pretty setting for sport. The game of this forest belt includes the great Maral stag and roe. The latter are larger than our roebuck, and have more developed horns. Besides these, the elk and reindeer are common to the whole length of the belt. The reindeer, like their relations the woodland cariboo of North America, pervade the whole country from the northern tundra to the southern limits of the trees. Neither they nor the elk dislike the proximity of settlements, and both are still numerous. So vast is the forest north of them, and so difficult to traverse, that it is unlikely that their numbers will diminish. Hazel grouse, black game, hares, and capercaillie add to the list of small game, and there are plenty of lynx and bear, though these are difficult to find in the forest region. The main drawback to this zone as a sporting ground is the uncertainty of finding the game, all of which is migratory at certain seasons, and is able to retire into covert too extensive to be beaten.

In the southern forests and mountains game is more concentrated and easier to reach, and it is in South Siberia and in the valleys of the great rivers of the far east, the Shilka, the Amur, and the Ussuri, that the big game shooter will find his best account. The whole region has been described as the Canada of the East. It more truly resembles the "great West" of North America. The steppes are in a sense the equivalent of the sage plains, the Altai and other ranges represent the Rockies, and the great rivers are not unlike those on the Pacific slope of the North American chain. Like the sage plains, the steppes hold game at certain seasons, though in nothing like the numbers once seen on the prairies. Antelope are common, and in the steppe mountains, bare and detached rocky hills which lie among the plains, wild sheep (*Ovis argali*) are common. In the southern mountains Marco Polo's sheep, the *Ovis ammon*, and the wild sheep of the Thian Shan are found in undiminished numbers. The steppe pools and lakes are also the centre of immense gatherings of wildfowl, gulls, waders, plover, duck, and wild geese, and the reedbeds hold both wolves and boar. It is noted that the wild boar of South Siberia steadily increases in size as its range advances further east. The boars of the Shilka and Amur Valleys, though not equal in size to those of the Carpathians, are probably the largest obtainable, except in Hungary. The steppes are also the native home of the sand grouse, which, if not affording exciting sport, are a useful addition to the commissariat.

But sport on the steppes will be only a "roadside" amusement on the way to the southern mountains, and many visitors to the new region will prefer to avoid the steppe entirely, and to pass on by rail to the eastern track, where the mountains overhang the river valleys, and the big game of China, India, and Siberia seem to meet in the Amur Valley and the Manchurian hills. In the mountains of the south-west there is a chance of lynx, snow leopard, ibex, and wild sheep, as well as the certainty of deer; but in the Ussuri Valley the northern tiger and bear have in places caused the new colonies to be forsaken, on account of their destruction of domestic animals, while in the hills of the Chinese frontier Luedorf's deer and possibly other scarce and little-known species will yield trophies of unfamiliar heads and hides. As a tiger-shooting centre the Ussuri Valley is destined to win an honourable place in the annals of sport. The few English travellers who have recently been there have had no more difficulty in finding these long-haired tigers than the pioneers of the Uganda Railway had in seeing lions on the Athi plains. They found them lying out in scrub and low bush, and "jumped" them with dogs. It does not strike one as a very safe or easy sport, but when one does get the skin of a Siberian tiger at the right season it is a treasure to be proud of.

Far the largest tiger skin mentioned in Rowland Ward's

book on big game measurements is that of a Northern tiger, though it came from the Chinese side of the Chino-Russian frontier. The length of the dressed skin is 13ft. 6in. The length of the next largest dressed skin is 2ft. less all but an inch, so we may take it that the Siberian tiger was nearly 2ft. longer than the biggest animal whose size is yet recorded. Supposing the tiger to have been 11½ft. long, or even 11ft., it must have been simply gigantic; there is no other word for it. The great tiger killed by the Maharajah of Kuch Behar, which comes next in size on the list, was about 1½ft. less than the measurement of its skin when dressed. It is significant also that the largest skull of a bear mentioned in Mr. Rowland Ward's book is that of a Siberian bear. It is 18in. long, and weighs 10lb., or more than double the weight of the largest tiger skull in Rowland Ward's collection, and 3½in. longer. The finest known horns of the *Ovis ammon* are also Siberian. In the course of the next few years we shall probably hear of the death of larger carnivora than have ever been killed by civilised man, when these new hunting grounds are open in the Far East of the old world.



IN Lord Roberts's "Forty-one Years in India" is a very interesting picture which shows in the centre General Sir F. S. Roberts, Bart., Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army—with side whiskers, oddly enough—General Sir Donald Stewart, Bart., Commander-in-Chief in India, on the right, and General the Hon. A. E. Hardinge, Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, on the left. This picture was taken no doubt in the neighbourhood of Bangalore in 1882, when the "three chiefs" met together for the last time at a camp of exercise. Many things have happened since then. The senior general, who outstripped Sir Frederick Roberts, and yet gave him the great command over which he made his name, had been on the shelf some time before he passed away on Monday last. Few men, however, had deserved better of their country than Sir Donald Stewart. In the meanwhile, the younger of the two men, having reached an age which was great to undertake the leadership of a great army, has during the last few weeks been showing in South Africa that while in brain power he is as good as ever he was, and far better than any men under him, his bodily activity is unimpaired.

Curiously enough, opposite to this interesting group is a page containing sundry observations which are worthy of notice, and something more, at the present time. "At that time," says Lord Roberts, "the importance of musketry training was not so generally recognised as it is now, especially by the senior officers, who had all entered the Service in the days of 'Brown Bess.'" Some of them had failed to note the remarkable alteration which the change from the musket to the rifle necessitated in the system of musketry instruction, or to study the very different conditions under which we could hope to win battles in the present day, compared with those under which some of our most celebrated victories had been won. It required time and patience to inspire officers with a belief in the wonderful shooting power of the Martini-Henry rifle, and it was even more difficult to make them realise that the better the weapon the greater the necessity for its being intelligently used.

If there is any man in the British service who ought to be profoundly impressed, not only with the value of accurate rifle fire, but with the risk run by him who despises it, that man is Lieutenant-Colonel Eyre Crabbe, of the 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards, for he and Major Hopton (formerly Captain Dutton Hunt) and Major Cowan, of the Engineers, and Captain Jasper Mayne and the two brothers Lamb have done more to foster the love of rifle shooting in the British Army than any other ten living men. In spite, therefore, of our sympathy for Colonel Crabbe, it is impossible to look without something approaching to indignation on the hare-brained exploit reported on Sunday, which ended in the death of one very promising officer (who

probably had no choice in the matter of joining the expedition), and in the wounding of Colonel Crabbe, Colonel Codrington, and the son of Major-General Trotter, Commanding the Home District, who again probably had no choice in the matter. That this small band, being in their senses, armed only with revolvers, and having no rifles, should try to head off a party of Boers known to be armed with rifles, and of unknown strength, is a thing which would be inconceivable if it were not apparently absolutely true.

The determination of the Duke of Norfolk to go to the front even in a subordinate capacity is about the best example of modern times of the saying that "blood will tell." He is, of course, a great and very excellent landlord in a beautiful part of Sussex, who feels that it is right that he should set an example; but he is something more. He is a Howard. That means that he is hereditary Earl Marshal and Chief Butler of England, and that he comes of a race of men who, from the time of Henry VI. downwards, have been accustomed to be *pars magna* of any great enterprise. Sir John Howard, the founder of the family, won his spurs in the French wars of the fifteenth century. His son was killed at Bosworth. Another Howard commanded the English army at Flodden Field—and so forth. In fact to mention the name of Howard is to summon ghosts from the pages of English history. Of these ghosts some came to a bad end. But there is hardly any great English family tree of which the branches, and from time to time the leading shoots, have not been lopped off on Tower Hill. The Duke of Norfolk is in the prime of life, having been born in 1847. Another Howard—Colonel Henry Howard, formerly of the 17th Lancers, and a country gentleman of Denbighshire—commands the Denbighshire contingent of Imperial Yeomanry.

The composition of the Royal Commission to enquire into the salmon fishery question, and the decrease of salmon in our rivers generally, seems to give a guarantee that the work will be well done. There has been no delay on the part of the Board of Trade in appointing the Commission. It remains that there shall be no delay on the part of the Commission itself, now that it has been appointed—that the work shall be quickly as well as well done. Lord Elgin is chairman. He has a knowledge of Scotch salmon rivers that fits him for the position. Colonel Lyne, of the Usk Fishery Board, and Mr. Fell, of the Kent Fishery Association, are members, together with Mr. W. E. Archer, Chief Inspector of English Fisheries and the Deputy Warden of the Fishmongers' Company. Among other members the name of the Duke of Bedford is mentioned, who has given a good deal of attention to the subject. On the whole, the composition of the board ought to give general satisfaction and confidence, the more so that it is not swamped by a preponderance of what is called "science" to outvote the opinion of practical men. We want men of practical knowledge who may be relied on to discharge their duties fearlessly, without favour or affection, and, so far as we are able to judge, we seem to have got them. We expect the result of their labours with all good hope.

The weather has been too cold for the trout fisher to do much on the earlier rivers; but, on the other hand, the spring salmon fishing has been well above the average of two or three previous years. It has been good not only in this part or in that, but all the country over, in England, Scotland, and Ireland alike. Ireland, from the Shannon River, has given the largest fish, over 43lb. In Scotland reports are good from Dee, Spey, and Tay. In England, the Cheshire Dee, the Severn, the Trent, and the Hampshire Avon have all a good tale to tell. The universal improvement is very satisfactory, and it is difficult to fail to associate it with a common cause, namely, the greater supply of water in all our rivers than has been their portion for many a season past. We were not without a suspicion that the result of heavy and prolonged flood in our rivers might have a marked effect in bringing the fish up; but the deficiency of the water seemed too simple an account to give of the progressive failure of our salmon supply, especially in face of all the learned theories suggested by way of explanation. It is, indeed, very far from being proved, even now, that a return to a normal rainfall will mean a return to a normal run of salmon. It is almost too good to be hoped for. But, at least, the present appearances give some little ground for such a hope.

Before this last spell of wintry weather came upon us, at the time of equinox, we were tempted to regret that the spring growth was not more forward. That regret must now be turned to thanksgiving, for it is very sure that all that has put up a green head will have that premature headpiece shrewdly nipped. We have noticed, too, that the birds are late in their domestic business this year. Had they a warning, denied to us, of what was to be? It would almost look like it. But they are seldom much wiser than ourselves in forecasts of the weather,

The programme has been published of the athletic sports and games that it is proposed to hold in connection with the forthcoming Paris Exhibition. It includes most of those games and exercises for which prizes are commonly awarded, but one item is particularly worthy of notice, and that is "discus" throwing. The programme gives no light on the nature of this competition, which we had believed to be entirely a matter of ancient history. It is the one form of athletic exercise of which we have a perfect sculptural presentment in the Discobolos of Agarias, and we may now hope to see our athletes forming their poses on this classic example. All the competitions will take place in the summer at Paris, except the golf, which will be decided at Compiègne in October.

It would be interesting if we could know how many people are awaiting the Paris Exhibition before ordering for themselves a motor-car. Their number, no doubt, is legion. Meanwhile, legion is the name of the motor-cars at present in use in France, where roads are both better and wider than they are with us. At the present moment the press on the automobile manufactories is so great that they will undertake to deliver you a machine in six months from date of order at a price about 50 per cent. below the price they require for immediate delivery. This is a fact that speaks for itself, and needs no comment. But the press after the Exhibition is likely to be greater still. In England we shall never allow the sixty miles an hour rate of the French automobiles, nor is it likely that this pace will long be permitted in France itself. At present it is generally approved as a means of arousing the railways to better exertions. If a Frenchman wishes to move quickly over the country he does not take the railway but his motor-car. Yet even with the broad roads of France there must be danger when the racing machine is going at such speed through the villages. In the country districts it is all very well. In England a thirty miles an hour rate would perhaps satisfy us, and ought to be attained without danger.

To those who played in the cup ties in the late seventies and early eighties there is something inexpressibly degrading about the account of the semi-final played at the Crystal Palace before some 40,000 people on Saturday last. It was a mere rough-and-tumble exhibition, in which the excitement of the players prevented them from doing justice either to the game or to themselves. It seemed at first something of consolation that a semi-final was being played in the South between two Southern and in the North between two Northern teams; it was at least necessary that one of the Southern teams should be left in for the final. But the feeling of comfort over that finished when regard was paid to the thoroughly disgraceful conduct of the teams in the field. It was not merely that they were rough—the old-fashioned teams were frequently that, and we have known a most chivalrous Etonian to boast that he seldom encountered an adversary without leaving his mark upon him—but they were also "slim," tricky, and mean in their roughness. So it became necessary to look further for consolation; and it was found in the fact that very little of this "slim" talent was indigenous to either of the counties from which the two teams were nominally drawn. From the point of view of football that was poor consolation; from the point of view of humanity there is something to be said for it. After all, it does not much matter where gladiators are bred.

Hope against hope as we may, there seems to be very little prospect of a real race between the University crews on Saturday. Meanwhile attention may very well be devoted to a remarkably sensible article by that well-known athlete, Mr. W. Beach Thomas, in the *Cornhill Magazine*, on "Training and its Effects." Many, many years ago—at least thirty years—and in the days when Thackeray was associated with the *Cornhill*, there was a similar article. But the data by which the effects of training may be judged are more complete now, and a survey of the list of names of prominent men—bishops, and judges, and the like—who have in their time rowed that long, strong race from Putney to Mortlake, shows plainly that so long as adequate care is taken in the original selection of men, training does no harm, but rather does good. One thing more we would point out to the anxious parent: the man who "gets his Blue" and keeps it at cricket, on the river, or in the football field must in all probability neglect his studies to some extent. On the other hand, he usually gets on in life much better than a Senior Wrangler. And apart from the great ones of this earth who have been members of this or that university eight or ten, it is quite worth while to look at the list of private schoolmasters of some order of affluence who owe at least as much to their blue caps as the success which some of them have attained and others have missed in the schools.

We have to direct the attention of ladies whose portraits appear in our pages, and of the owners and occupants of country houses and gardens which we illustrate from time to time, to the

proceedings of an American lady, who, under various names, but in the same handwriting, is in the habit of writing to them for photographs with the avowed object of placing them in a "scrap-book." These letters are written without authority from us, and it is best to leave them unanswered. To comply with the request is to run the risk of having the photographs reproduced in an indifferent manner in a cheap American publication.

In this week's issue we announce our third Photographic Competition, which is the direct outcome of the remarkable number and excellence of the entries for our winter prizes. Two observations we would make by way of preliminary. Firstly, we trust that, since the rules clearly indicate plant life in spring, competitors will not hesitate to construe that indication in its widest sense, and that they will by no means neglect Nature's ever-varying garden. Secondly, it may be observed that no restriction is placed upon entries by purely professional photographic artists. That is because it is really impossible to draw a precise line between them and the amateurs. But experience has shown that those who use the camera for amusement have little or nothing to fear from those who earn their livelihood by its use.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece is the portrait of Miss Bourke, daughter of the Hon. Edward Roden Bourke, a son of the fifth Earl of Mayo, who married Miss Emma Mary Augusta, daughter of Lieutenant-General George Cliffe Hatch, K.S.I. The portrait of her sister, Mrs. Henry Lindsay, has already been seen in *COUNTRY LIFE*. The Hon. E. R. Bourke's house in town is 35, Great Cumberland Place.

Photographic Competition.

ON account of the great success that attended our recent Photographic Competition, and the interest it created amongst a large number of the readers of *COUNTRY LIFE*, many of whom sent photographs of high artistic merit, it has been decided, in order to further encourage the art, which is so eminently suited to lovers of country life, to begin another competition for

PHOTOGRAPHS OF SPRING SUBJECTS.

The beautiful effects to be obtained in the garden at this season of the year are varied, and although the following short list by no means covers the whole ground, it will suggest the class of subject that may be worthy of the attention of intending competitors:

Spring Flowers.—Particularly the artistic effects obtained by growing Narcissi, Scillas, Tulips, and other flowers in meadow grass, or beneath trees, by man and by Nature.

Spring Flowers on the Rock Garden.—To show effects not merely of many kinds, but of individual flowers in pretty aspects.

Spring Flowers in the Border, or massed upon the lawn or in beds.

Spring Flowers in the Shrubbery.

For the best set of not less than twelve photographs a prize of

FIVE POUNDS

will be awarded.

The photographs should be silver prints—preferably on printing-out paper—not smaller than half-plate size, and should be carefully packed, and addressed to the Editor in a parcel bearing the words "Photographic Competition" on the outside. For the purpose of identification each individual photograph must be clearly marked with the name and address of the competitor, but no responsibility for the safe keeping of the competing photographs can be accepted, although every care will be taken to return safely any unsuccessful photographs if stamps for this purpose are enclosed.

It is understood that all reproduction rights of the successful photographs will pass to the Proprietors of *COUNTRY LIFE*, and, if required, the negatives of these pictures will be given up to them. The Proprietors also reserve to themselves the right to make use of any of the unsuccessful photographs upon payment of from 5s. to 10s. 6d. for each picture published, according to their idea of merit.

The Competition will close on June 21st, and the decision of the Editor, which will be final and without appeal, will be announced as early as possible after this date.



A PICTURESQUE

NESTLING amid the winding folds of a deep Devoncombe, and almost within sound of the sea that frets the red headlands some half mile distant, lies the little hamlet of Cockington, slumbering as peacefully in its wood-embowered valley as if the age of steam and electricity were still in the dim vista of futurity. Appearances are, however, deceptive, and its retirement is more seeming than real, for a ten minutes' walk lands the pedestrian at the station from which the Torquay express starts on its record journey to the 220 miles distant metropolis, accomplishing the longest sustained run in the United Kingdom between the cathedral city of Exeter and London, while just beyond the eastern crest of its valley rampart, though happily invisible from the village, lies the realm of stuccodom, formerly known as Chelston, but which has latterly endeavoured to identify itself with the ancient village by the assumption of its title, where the brand-new villas of the successful trader and the retired officer stand in amicable propinquity.

The village of Cockington is of no mushroom growth, mention of it being made in the ante-conquest times of Edward the Confessor, while the derivation of its name is of pre-Roman origin, it being held by antiquarians to be compounded of "Cock,"

DEVONSHIRE HAMLET.

vicissitudes being limited to Kokinton, Kokyngton, Cockynton, Cockyngton, Cockinton, Cochintona, and Chocintona, the two latter specimens of spelling being culled from the pages of the Domesday Book.

In the fourteenth century the village must have been in a comparatively flourishing condition, since a market and fair were held there every Monday; but as in those lawless times the inhabitants enjoyed the equivocal advantage of being under the rule of a lord of the manor, who had the power of inflicting capital punishment, their prosperity was doubtless tempered by a certain amount of discretion.

In 1659 the village appears to have arrived at the most populous period of its existence, as at that date a survey of the manor gives the number of houses in Cockington as being thirty-seven, exclusive of the Court, the residence of the lord of the manor, and not reckoning the habitations at Chelston or those on the seashore at Livermead. At the present time there are sixteen detached houses in the village, divided into twenty-six tenements.

From the main road that skirts Torbay, a lane winds up the secluded valley, bounded on the one hand by steeply-sloping



THE OLD CHURCH.

red; "ing," meadow; and "ton," enclosure, the last two being Saxon words and the first Celtic, and the whole signifying the enclosure of the red meadow, an appellation that the ruddy colour of the soil amply justifies.

Clerks in the ancient days exhibited a fine disregard in the matter of spelling, and it is no uncommon incident to find a name written in three different ways in the same document. The name of Cockington naturally did not escape disarrangement at the hands of the scribes; but, luckily, its component letters never got so far adrift as to render identification impossible or even difficult, an event of by no means infrequent occurrence, its

orchards, a cloud of shell pink in blossom-time, and on the other by a narrow strip of emerald green water meadow, where in the summertime the red Devon cattle stand lazily ruminating in the lush grass, their chestnut-coloured coats flecked by the sun glints that filter through the foliage of the giant elms which overshadow the lane with their leafy branches, while on the further side of the meadow the sudden hill is shrouded in a hanging wood, carpeted in the spring with the shimmering azure of countless bluebells.

Over the crest of the hill another lane, shaded by arching boughs, and sunk a good roft. below the surface of the



THE OLD FORGE.

surrounding land by the use of centuries, descends abruptly, with unexpected turns, to the village below, meeting the valley lane at right angles, and forming with it four cross roads. At these cross roads stands the old forge, a structure, in all probability, absolutely unique. The smithy is surmounted by a high-pitched thatched roof that sweeps forward with a downward curve and projects some 8ft. beyond the wall, where it rests on three untrimmed timber props, casting a deep shadow on the smithy door, through which the bright sparks from the anvil gleam cheerily, and providing grateful shelter for the horses that are brought to be shod on burning summer noons.

Cockington, although not so frequented by the fraternity of palette and brush as another Devonshire village, namely, Clovelly, where almost every corner of the steep cobbled causeway is vantage ground for an easel, is by no means neglected by the amateur followers of art, for whom the weather-beaten forge has an irresistible attraction, its picturesqueness, simplicity of detail, and the high relief into which it is thrown by its wooded background, inviting the veriest tyro in water-colours to attempt its delineation, and every fine summer's day sees one or more busily engaged in the portrayal of its deep, moss-mantled slope of thatch. Numerous, however, as are the sketchers, the votaries of sun-pictures, in these days of cheap cameras, outnumber them by ten to one, and certainly but few villages afford such an opportunity of perpetuating the charms of rural environment; indeed, to such an extent has this been already carried that a dweller in the immediate neighbourhood lately received from the antipodes a Christmas card bearing upon it a photograph of the well-known forge, the sender little thinking that the original of the view lay almost at the recipient's doorstep. Nowadays, even in the most rural districts of England, slate is rapidly displacing thatch as a roofing material, and, except in villages where the owner of the land appreciates the old-time charm of the mellow-tinted deep-eaved roofs, here yellow with freshly-laid wheat-straw, here sombre brown, here flaked with soft cushions of moss that in the ever-shifting sunrays gleam with infinite gradations of green and gold, the thatch is rarely renewed. In these times of threshing machines the straw is mangled far more than was the case when of old the measured beat of the flails resounded from the echoing barn floors, and good "reed" is scarce, while the thatcher, formerly a prominent village worthy, has had, perforce, to turn his abilities to other account. Happily in Cockington, as will be seen from the accompanying illustrations, the trade of the thatcher is not a lost art. Perhaps one of the chief attractions of the place lies in the diversity of form shown by the houses; no two are alike; each possesses a distinct individuality of its own; here stands a many-gabled old farmhouse, its tall brick chimneys running up the outer walls and overtopping the roof-ridge by many feet; here a cottage with projecting upper storey supported by rough timber uprights, the deep thatched eaves curving outwards over each of the two latticed bedroom windows; here an

ivy-mantled lodge; here a house flanked by a small boarded store-room, raised some 6ft. from the ground on brick pillars, beneath the floor of which runs the path barred by a wicket, the structure having all the picturesque effect of a lych-gate. There is no stiff uniformity of line in the disposition of the scattered houses, some face the lane at various distances and angles, while the gable ends of others abut on the road in the outer wall of one of these latter, garlanded by a cluster rose, being the village post-box.

Dissimilar as are the styles of the cottages themselves, their gardens exhibit an even greater variety of interest. Most of the cottagers are gardeners in their spare moments, and each plot reflects the particular tastes of its custodian. All, even the very smallest, are restful to the eye, for in them is no striving after effect, no formal exactitude, no pattern beds and suchlike abominations, and the sweet, old-fashioned flowers repay with no niggard hand the labour of love bestowed upon them by their peasant proprietors. The cottager, to his credit be it said, is keenly appreciative of the value of fragrance, and from the little gardens delicious

breaths of perfume are wafted adown the winding road. "Across the porch the jasmine twines," the stately Madonna lily, emblem of purity,

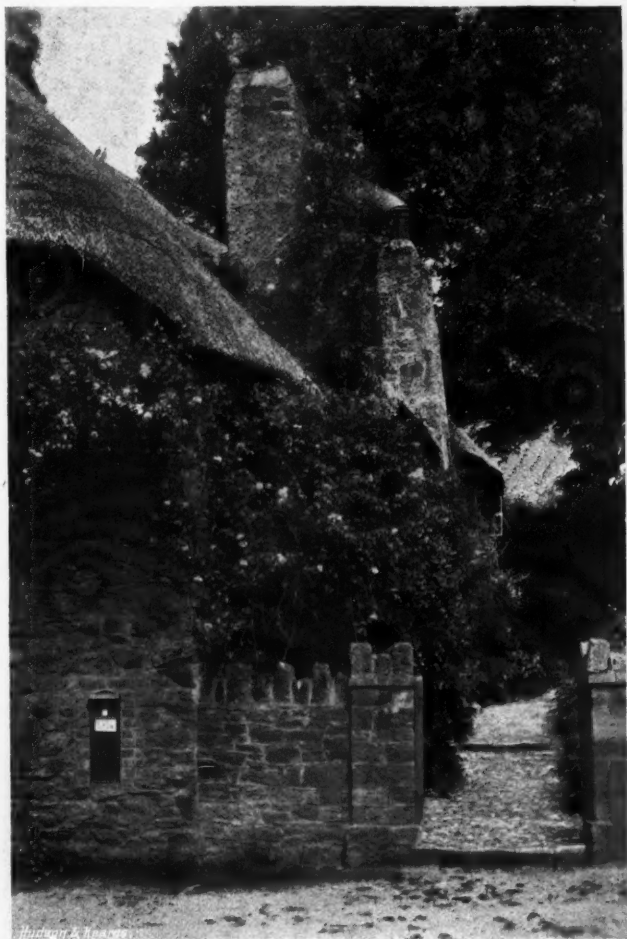
"The wand-like lily that lifted up
Like a Maenad its moonlight-coloured cup,"

attains nowhere that perfection of chaste beauty that dowers it in the humble cottage garden. The old double rockets, beloved of our grandmothers, grow in masses, spreading far and wide a perfume so delicious that the wayfarer pauses, wondering what manner of flower it may be that steeps the air with such essence. White pinks and clove carnations distil their exquisite odours, stocks, wallflowers, and great lavender bushes exhale their sweetnesses, and in the dewy evenings the sweet briar's delicate aroma wanders on the flagging breeze.



THE COCKINGTON LANE.

"Fragrance," as has been well said, "is the song of the flowers," and under no conditions is the song more sweetly sung than in the little village gardens. In one great bushes of cabbage roses and Maiden's Blush stand by the wicket-gate; in another the walls are festooned with the flowers of a climbing rose to the overhanging eaves, the bloom-laden, clambering shoots ascending to the roof and wreathing the very chimney with a wealth of snowy blossom, out of which, on still evenings, the blue smoke floats upward, becoming fiercer as it ascends, until at length it loses itself amid the bountiful foliage of an overshadowing elm. In



THE VILLAGE POST-OFFICE.

the flowering myrtle, trained about a lattice casement, the spotted flycatchers have built their nest; over another cottage wall the passion-flower has flung its tangled veil, thickly set with large star-flowers that, as the winter days approach, give place to oval orange-tinted fruits that gleam like fairy lamps among the dark leafage, while here the lofty red spires of a holly-hoc!, the embodiment of stalwart comeliness, glow against a whitewashed wall, or a breadth of purple draws the eye to where the iris battalions are flowering profusely. In the spring, about May Day or sometimes earlier, the air is entirely possessed by one scent, the fragrance of innumerable lilac blossoms, borne on giant bushes that here and there almost obscure the thatched eaves of



A COTTAGE PLOT.

some of the cottages in their luxuriance; then the pink thorn begins its fugitive display, and from the laburnums hang suspended their arrested showers of gold, while through the summer and into the late autumn one of the finest standard magnolias in England, growing but a few yards back from the road, bears a succession of its large, ivory-white odorous chalice. In the surrounding hedgerows the wild flowers bloom, pale primroses, bluebells, and white violets, followed by the fragile wood-sorrel's silvery cups, and the woodruff, with its faint essence of new-mown hay, with a host of other native blossoms.

An article on the village of Cockington would be incomplete without a passing reference to the grey old church, with its ivy-clad Roman tower, that stands, tree-enshrouded, within the beautiful grounds of the Court, and with the grassy slopes, through which runs the narrow footpath leading to its porch, golden in the spring with daffodils that star the ground beneath the budding limes. The first mention of the church occurs in documents

of the time of Henry I., some 760 years ago, and antiquarians find much of interest within its walls, while on summer Sabbaths the picturesque fane is extensively resorted to by residents in the neighbouring town of Torquay.

The Court, an Elizabethan structure, is situated hard by the church, and is well protected from gales by wooded hills. Its grounds, plentifully studded with fine trees, possess great natural



AN OLD FARMHOUSE.

charms, not the least of these being three lakelets, which in February are surrounded by countless thousands of snow-drops.
S. W. FITZHERBERT.

ON THE GREEN.

A RECENT letter in *Golf Illustrated*, jointly signed by Colonel Elliot Lockhart, as secretary of the Royal and Ancient Club of St. Andrews, and by Mr. Herbert Johnstone, as honorary secretary of the Tait Memorial Fund, will remove some difficulty that presented itself to not a few as to the reason for the two funds that are in process of creation, the one instituted by the Royal and Ancient Club and the other by a committee of the late Mr. Tait's friends. The necessity of the two funds, simultaneously collected, did not seem obvious, and the possibility that they might be operating at mutual cross purposes could not fail to suggest itself. The letter referred to removes all difficulties of that nature by showing that the two are working on distinct lines and in perfect harmony, the Royal and Ancient Club requesting subscriptions, limited to five guineas, from various golf clubs, and the other committee asking for subscriptions, with the modest maximum of one guinea, from individual golfers. So much for the lines on which the two are working. As a guarantee of their harmony, the letter states that when the lists are closed the committees will mutually confer, and will invite to aid their conference an expression of opinion from the late Mr. Tait's relations as to the form that the memorial shall take.

Surely one of the favourites in the forthcoming amateur championship meeting at Sandwich will be Mr. Ellis, the younger—he who is now the strongest player in the Oxford team and has beaten almost every man who has met him in the Oxford team matches. Lately at Woking, where the team won by a balance of holes that was almost wholly of his contribution, he beat Mr. Emley Blackwell, who knows the Woking course very well, by seven holes. This is a heavy account out of an eighteen-hole match, and shows that Mr. Ellis must be in the best of his form. He has all the power that is needed for playing the Sandwich course well, and we do not know of any weak point that is likely to put him at any disadvantage there. In previous notes on the green we have looked at the excellent chances for the championship of Mr. Eric Hambro, who always plays so well at Sandwich, and has a length of drive that cannot fail to tell on that trying course. Another who is in remarkably good form is the last-named's cousin, Mr. Everard Martin Smith, who has carried nearly all before him in the Biarritz competitions lately, beating Mr. Horace Hutchinson, who is said to have been badly off his game at Biarritz, in the final tie for the Town Cup, under handicap, and also winning two out of three of the scratch events. Of course, mentioning the chances of these younger men of the rising generation is not to imply that we disregard those of the older school, notably Mr. Hilton, and one or two previous winners and runners up in the amateur championship tournament.



THE WINDING VILLAGE ROAD.

Country Life in a Corner of the Venetian Alps

FROM such scenes we must now turn to matters agricultural, and consider how the farming of the estate is carried on. The system known as that of the "Mezzadria"—a system spread throughout most of the "Veneto" and also in Tuscany—is here in use. It consists in the division of the fruits of the earth and all the produce derived from the cattle between

and no rent pass between them. The landlord, however, is bound to keep his peasants' houses in repair; and they on their side have to pay a yearly tribute of so many eggs, chickens, and capons, the number being fixed according to the amount and quality of land allotted to each family. The peasants must also give their services for any job on which their master may choose

to employ them, when they receive no compensation beyond their food. The peasants have besides to take their share in the expenses of the farm, and pay half the bills for seeds, artificial manure, sulphate of copper for the vines, and so on. They must also buy the tools, implements, waggons, harness, etc., required for farming purposes—articles that they remove with them every time they change their situation. The taxes are all borne by the landlord alone. He, too, must provide all the trees needed on the property, including the fruit trees and the vines. On a well-regulated farm accounts are settled at least once a year. The peasants are often in debt, a state of things generally consequent on the insufficiency of their half of the crops to feed the number of mouths in the family. They then apply to their "Padrone" for help (an appeal not often refused), and the amount is entered on their debit page, to be made good at the earliest opportunity.

The rearing of cattle is the most important feature in the Bellunese farming, and is considered the chief source of wealth on the farm. The breed is a particularly good one, the animals being strong, gentle, and very enduring. They are much in request in the Venetian plains, and are generally bought when about



Villa Sorchiera

looking from the house.

the landlord and the peasants on the property. "Half and half" might be the motto of this system, for in all things, with but slight exceptions, all the yields from land and cattle are divided equally between the owner and the tiller of the soil. No wages

considered the chief source of wealth on the farm. The breed is a particularly good one, the animals being strong, gentle, and very enduring. They are much in request in the Venetian plains, and are generally bought when about

three years old and carried away to the lowlands, where a team of six or eight oxen will often be seen yoked to the plough to drag it through the deep rich alluvial soil of those districts. The price a good, well-matched pair of three year olds will fetch ranges from 500fr. to 700fr., or, roughly speaking, from £20 to £28. The status of a farm is judged by the head of cattle kept on it, and a farm of 100 acres is considered well stocked if it carries from forty-five to fifty animals. In summer the cattle are sent to higher mountain land to economise the home fodder, and at the same time to provide a change of pasturage and air, the expenses for their summering on the heights being shared equally between landlord and peasant. Dairy farming is sadly neglected in this part of the world. The peasants are as ignorant as they are obstinate, and any attempt to enlighten them arouses suspicion and dislike. The milk, they consider, should be devoted exclusively to nourishing the calves; that the superfluous amount should be turned into cheese and butter is to them a departure from time-honoured traditions not easy to accept. The introduction of a churn and a butter-worker has opened their eyes somewhat, but the struggle to add this source of income to their industries is hard, and they resent a practice that was unknown to their forefathers and that appeals but little to them.

Sheep are voted more harmful than profitable, and goats are relegated to the higher, rougher ground of the Cadore.

The first crops to be gathered in are those of hay, seeds, and lucerne. Each of these will average three yields—even four in a good year—and since the peasants have overcome their diffidence about artificial manure each yield is good. Mowing machines are unknown; all the crops are reaped by hand, and, indeed, on many of the mountain slopes no other form of procedure would be possible. Men, lads, and occasionally even the women, handle a scythe remarkably well, and in all field labour the female population take their share with the male, and are often more active and diligent. The hay and clover crops are followed in rotation by those of hemp, beans, apples, Indian corn or maize, and wine. Wheat is little grown so far north, and only small quantities of rye, barley, and oats are cultivated all around.

The crop that commends itself most to the peasants is that of the maize or Indian corn, and they will devote themselves soul and body to the cultivation and successful growth of their beloved "sorgo," as they term it in their dialect. There is much to be said to justify this devotion, though the over-cultivation of the plant is much to be avoided. Not only is the plant so hardy that it will thrive in a dry or wet season alike, but it also resists to a great extent the ravages of a hailstorm (that scourge to farmers all through Italy), and provides food and bedding to man and beast. The grain, when ground, produces the staple food of the peasants, known as "polenta," and which they eat with beans or cheese all the year round. For bedding they use the soft fibrous substance which encases the pods and protects the grain till it is ripe. A more salubrious, cleanly, and comfortable material to sleep on than that made by these "cartocci" it would be difficult to find, and the ease with which they can be changed year by year enhances their hygienic merits not a little. The stalks of the Indian corn constitute excellent litter for the animals, while the feathery tufts growing on the top of the plants provide them with a dainty, if not very filling, kind of fodder. The husks, after the grain is extracted, are used for kindling, so that the properties of the maize, besides being many and varied, are all useful.

The vine should have been noticed before the Indian corn, for it is of higher importance, and ought to be a source of higher

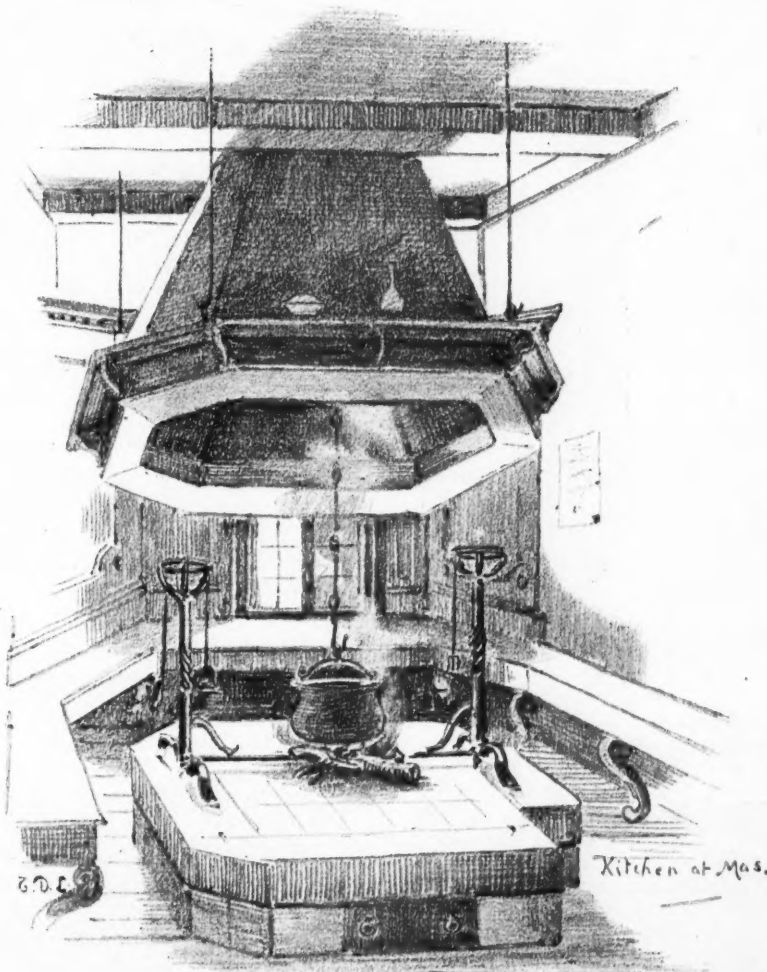
income. Its cultivation is, however, sadly in arrears in the province of Belluno, and the indifference of the peasants towards it increases the difficulty a hundredfold. The vines most largely grown are American ones, known as the Uva Isabella, or Fragola, from the slight flavour of strawberry it possesses, and Clinto. These American vines have special properties for resisting *poronospera*, *phylloxera*, and other diseases inherent to vines, and were introduced into the country when those evils were rife in the neighbourhood some forty or fifty years ago. They have been left untouched, partly from the great expense consequent on changing them for French or Italian vines, and partly with a view to grafting better material on to their seasoned stock. A very good native white wine was made at Socchieva in the prosperous days of long ago, and no efforts are being spared now to restore the credit of this wine to its former renown.

The process of making the wine is most primitive. Early in October the grapes are gathered and conveyed in ox-waggons to a large shed where the vats stand. The bunches—after the rotten berries have been removed to some extent—are pitchforked into as many vats as they will fill, the black and white grapes being of course kept separate. The labour of "treading the wine-press" then begins. Three or four sturdy young peasants, with their trousers tucked up high above their knees, mount by steps to the top of the vat and take their stand on the grapes. The treading of the grapes is hard work, and is worked at steadily till a certain quantity of juice has been squeezed out. Then a plug is extracted from the bottom of the vat, and out rushes the red frothy liquid into a pail put to receive it. Here it is measured, and then placed in other vats, where it stays for three or four days while the process of fermentation takes place. The dregs of skins, pips, and stalks left in the vats settle for a few days, when some water is poured over them, and an indifferent beverage called "vino piccolo" (little wine) is then the result.

The other harvests that demand special notice are those of the beans and the apples. The amount of beans eaten by all classes throughout Italy makes their cultivation a matter of widespread interest, and as the Bellunese beans are considered by connoisseurs to be second to none, the demand for them never flags. The quality of the apples also is first-rate, and though a

good ingathering of them can only be looked for every second year at the outside, they form an important item on a well-kept estate. On each side of the flower garden, though separated from it by the hornbeam hedges, are two good-sized orchards. The ground slopes downwards in both of them, and it is a pretty sight to see the branches laden with their red, russet, pink, and white fruit bending nearly to the earth, and often requiring props to help them to bear their load of wealth and beauty. A small pond lies at the bottom of one of these orchards, whereon some black and white ducks float in happy ownership, dividing their possession with some gold fish, and only roused from the monotonous bliss of their existence when the house washing has to be done, and when two or three peasant women spread their stores of linen and flaunt their soapsuds in the region otherwise devoted to aquatic life.

The ingathering of these various crops occupies the land-owners and the peasants during the autumn months, and once all is carried and stored the division of the fruits of the earth takes place, producing a sense of satisfaction or the reverse, according to whether the year has been a good or a bad one. The land-owner after that retires in most cases to one of the neighbouring provincial towns, there to busy himself with such social attractions



as the winter season may present. The peasant remains to watch over the animals, to battle with the snow, which sometimes lies over 3ft. in depth, and to while away the long dark hours of winter as best he can. His lot, considering his education and mode of living, is not essentially a hard one; indeed, under some "padroni" it is quite the opposite. In spring, summer, and autumn his time is nearly all spent out of doors; in winter he can only get out when the weather allows of it. His time then is mostly spent in the cowshed, where the heat from the cattle is so great and so close that it is unbearable to those not accustomed to it. The peasant, however, seems in no way affected by it, and only leaves it for his own fireside when he wishes for change of scene and surrounding. The hearth—of which a faithful representation, drawn at a place a few miles from

Socchieva, is here given—is placed in nearly every cottage in the middle of the room, or in an alcove opening from it, and on it are laid great logs of wood that blaze out their crackling notes of warmth and brightness. The peasants sit round the fire on wooden settles, varying their gossip with long monotonous singing, and often weaving baskets of different shapes and sizes to serve on the farm and in the garden when the snows shall have melted from off the land, and the outdoor labours and occupations will be resumed with all the happiness and hopefulness that spring brings with it to every country and to every life.

ALETHEA WIEL.

The illustrations are all from original pencil drawings done on the spot by Sir Thomas Dick-Lauder, Bart.

DEER-STALKING IN THE HIGHLANDS.

WHEN last in Scotland I managed to obtain a series of snap-shots illustrating a Highland deer-stalking expedition, which would, I grieve to say, have been the more complete but for a sad want of gallantry on the part of the men whose exploits I was chronicling, in leaving me ignominiously planted behind a big rock at the critical moment, lest the sight of me and my kodak might frighten the stag.

The day being fine and the hills unclouded, the dog-cart to drive us up to the deer forest was ordered for ten o'clock, and directly after breakfast we all repaired to the target, which consisted of a stag's body painted on the side of a shed, in order to try the rifles before starting. The difficulty in this apparently simple proceeding lay in the fact that, each man in turn having fired his shot, and the gillie stationed near by having run forward to mark the places hit, each sportsman quietly but firmly claimed the only bull's-eye for himself, to the chagrin of the others, and in fact could not be pacified until the lady of his choice privately assured him that she had seen *his* bullet strike just there! Indeed, in the case of one pretty and accomplished flirt, the chosen confidante of at least three men, I tremble to think of the perjury committed in the course of a single morning.

Deer-stalking is doubtless extremely hungry work, for, starting at ten in the morning, one may not return until eight or nine o'clock at night, and it is considered more sportsmanlike to be contented to carry a tin case containing only a couple of



FIRING AT THE TARGET.

sandwiches and a piece of cake of meagre proportions, which the stalker often unsuccessfully tries to keep towards his tea. However, one of the illustrations shows a very pleasant little lunch, partaken of on the roadside by two more greedy members of the party, whilst the gillie lay on his back spying the surrounding snow-capped hills, before we started on our long and arduous tramp.

The appearance of our little group was hardly prepossessing, for we had all been directed by our host the night before to garb ourselves in the oldest, duller-coloured garments we possessed, in order to render ourselves as inconspicuous as possible upon the mountain-side; and to further this desirable end, the men, with a singular want of vanity and an utter heedlessness of appearances which surprised us, even went so far as to take off their collars and throw them back into the cart before the start.

After a good stiff climb to windward of a small herd of deer, comprising some half-a-dozen hinds and a very fair-sized stag, seen grazing on the skyline, we hid behind a rock while the gillie took one last spy round to make sure that no finer beast was to be seen within easy distance of us.



THE FATAL SHOT.

This proving, however, not to be the case, we started again on a long toilsome scramble, made always with the greatest care and noiselessness, which finally brought us to a large overgrown rock within about 80yds. or 100yds. of the stag—a handsome creature, as he stopped feeding now and again to snuff the wind, as if he suspected enemies in the near vicinity. And then the fatal shot was made which brought him down like a stone, with a bullet right through his spine.

The huge delight of the lucky stalker, whose first experience of deer-stalking this was, was destined to be short-lived, however, for the other and more experienced members of the party, who had evidently the keenest recollections of the sorrows of their youth, hurriedly explained their intention of initiating him into the important ceremony of "blooding," for which he was innocently unprepared; but his prayers and entreaties availed him nothing, and a ceremony only second, I should imagine, in unattractiveness to that at one time practised upon the happy *voyageur* who for the first time crossed the line ensued. Suffice it to say, in the words of Budge and Toddy of immortal fame, that it was *very* "bluggy."

A sparkling mountain stream which trickled down the hillside close at hand soon repaired somewhat the damage done to an erstwhile pleasing countenance, and as the sudden twilight of a Highland evening was overtaking us, we ate our rather belated lunch and started on our homeward road, not neglecting to call on our way back at the croft of one



MARKING A BULL'S-EYE.

of the under-gillies to ask him to go up with the pony to fetch back the prize, which he accordingly did, starting at daybreak and bringing it home in triumph early the following morning, when all the available hand cameras were requisitioned to snap-shot the noble beast, whilst the gillie watched our frivolous proceedings with a deep, silent contempt, and a muttered aside to his pony: "Puir, simple bodies!"



A PLEASANT LITTLE LUNCH.



ON THE HOMEWARD ROAD.

Why Do Birds Sing?

EVER since the writer of the Song of Solomon rapturously described the season of the singing of birds and the welcome voice in his land, there has been a vibrating echo in the heart of man to every warble from bush or tree or air all over the world. For man and bird are the only two animals that are possessed of the power of song. Widely different are these two dwellers upon earth, yet the love of sweet music has bound them with a warm sympathy for all generations; and there is, no doubt, a deep-set cause for this in the strange mystery of life.

Why do birds sing? Some hold that the song of birds is the expression of their pride in bright plumage; but these forget that excellent singing and gaudy appearance are generally in inverse ratio. The peacock, Juno of birds, has a most repulsive "scraich" in his voice; whereas the prince of singers, the lark, is quietly unassuming in his plumage.

Other observers hold that the instinct of song among birds is but an outward expression of exuberant internal joy. Yes, but the joy has one prime source. It is not the mere expression of pastime or pleasurable diversion, though, in some cases, singing more or less continues throughout the year.

Scientific writers, however, have traced the singing of birds to the love impulses of mating. As in the spring season the robin's breast is decked in fuller crimson, the lapwing's crest is improved, the dove's eye has a lovelier iris, so the wild bird, like the young man, has his fancy "lightly turned to thoughts of love."

How observing was Tennyson of the varied song of birds! In "The Gardener's Daughter," when the theme of love was engrossing the souls of the young painters, we have this realisation of bird-song:

"From the woods

Came voices of the well-contented doves.
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
But shook his song together as he near'd
His happy home, the ground. To left and right
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
The redcap whistled; and the nightingale
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day."

Surely these birds had joyful thoughts, as the bushes echoed the harmonies of the bird-orchestra. It was not from the vanity of song that they strained every nerve to do justice to themselves. It was for love that they praised the heavens:

"Were there nothing else

For which to praise the heavens but only love,
That only love were cause enough for praise."

Yes, birds have some sense of why they sing. They sing their best when inspired by affection. Sexual rivalry and song seem inseparable. The love is fully expressed in the song. For hours at a time will the male thrushes and blackbirds rival each other in their endeavour to attract the attention of their listening mates.

Song, then, originates in birds in sexual competition, and is developed in the ever-loving attachment of the male as an encouragement to the female, while she has her weary sitting on the eggs in her secluded nest. So keen is the rivalry of song, that birds have been known actually to die under the violent exertions of song that a challenge inspired. The robin sometimes gets so excited while he sings against a rival, that his song breaks into harsh sounds which are nothing but screams of defiance. Mild temperature, abundance of food, bright plumage, and ecstatic joy may be strong incentives to song, but only indirectly as these conditions affect the impulse of love. Thomson thus beautifully brings out the idea in his "Seasons":

"'Tis love creates their melody, and all
This waste of music is the voice of love;
That even to birds, and beasts, the tender arts
Of pleasing teaches. Hence the glossy kind
Try every winning way inventive love
Can dictate; and in courtship to their mates
Pour forth their little souls."

It is curious to observe that there is no direct evidence to support the

for there is no animal, of its own accord, that has ever sought the companionship of man as freely and sincerely as many of the birds have. The affection of some birds for man is at the foundation of their song impulse.

In a limited way birds have their lyric and their dramatic moods, their serious and comic songs, their recitative and their oratorical methods. They are conscious of a superiority of voice in sexual competition; the sweetest sounds at their command are instinctively uttered when they feel pleased. With a troubadour's tact the songbird will pour out his love lay; and Nature inspires him as she stirs up the poet's soul.
J. G. McPHERSON.

FROM PIG-STICKING TO BLOEMFONTEIN.

IF "Peace hath her victories not less renowned than war," Lord Roberts would have been well qualified to win them; for his is the master mind that must go to the front and take command in whatever he enters upon. And if genius itself is not "the infinite capacity for taking pains," as some hold, still that

capacity is the necessary concomitant of genius that would rise to the very highest place. So Lord Roberts having chosen the profession of arms, devoted to it all the concentrated energies of his many-sided mind, and the world has seen the result. Always doing the work of three men as a soldier, he left himself small leisure for sport or the amenities of civil life; but when he had reached the command-in-chief in India he found that the duties of his exalted station necessitated an almost equal familiarity with the complicated politics of India and its frontier as with the details of military administration. Then it was that he reaped the full reward for the sympathetic care with which during the whole of his career he had studied the feelings of the natives of India and conciliated their prejudices. Stern as steel when occasion required—witness the dread vengeance of Sherpur—he was diplomacy itself in ordinary intercourse, and won the lifelong devotion of hundreds of brave men by simple acts of courtesy and unwearying thoughtfulness for the feelings of others. From the humblest sepoy or villager to the mightiest maharaja in the Empire of India there was not a man who came into contact with Lord Roberts but was favourably influenced thereby towards the great soldier himself as the British raj whose sword-hand he was. And as his military position sundered him from political red tape, he was often able to render valuable political service to the Government of India under the guise of a friendly visit to a native state for purposes of sport or military inspection. Our little photograph represents the hero of Candahar on such an occasion. He has just arrived at Jammu, the winter capital of the Maharaja of Kashmir, for a pig-sticking picnic, and the instant that he has alighted from the state carriage which has driven him from the Maharaja's railway station, before even he has had time to doff his ulster or repair to the refreshment tent, the ubiquitous photographer claims his due; and no better summary of the regeneration of the troubled Kashmir State could be produced than the little group immediately surrounding Lord Roberts in this picture. On his right stands Lieutenant the Hon. Frederick Roberts, who has, alas! been killed in South Africa, a young officer

who promised to follow in his father's footsteps. On his left is the Maharaja of Kashmir, a ruler who had not long before fallen under the influence of evil advisers, and had given the Government of India great trouble; for the northern frontiers of Kashmir are the flanges of the Hindu Kush, over whose passes the Russians were then threatening to creep. So for a time the Maharaja had been deprived of his ruling powers, and we were fortunate to find in one of his brothers, Rajah Amar Singh (standing on the Maharaja's left), a courageous and public-spirited scion of the house of Kashmir, willing to take all the burden and odium of reforming his brother's kingdom. To aid him in the task the Government of India lent to the Kashmir State the services of picked officials, English and native, of whom two of the most important are included in this group. Behind the Maharaja stands Colonel Neville Chamberlain, specially selected by Lord Roberts for the difficult task of regenerating the rotten army of Kashmir, and on the other side, standing on



DEAR-STALKING: THROUGH THE SPY-GLASS.

popular belief that young birds, without tuition or experience, warble off the song characteristic of their species. The songs of birds seem to be acquired by imitation; and if young birds never heard the song of their species, they would be totally unable to produce it. "As the old cock crows, the young one learns."

Every bird fancier is aware how readily, under suitable conditions, young birds will acquire a song totally unlike what would be expected if inherited ability prevailed. In fact, a bird's song is just as much an acquired faculty as the acquisition of language by a child. But the imitated song, intensified by sexual affinity, is worthy of man's study, while it contributes to his sense of enjoyment.

Many who take to the quiet retreats of country life, "far from the madding crowd," are familiar with the varied music of the songsters of the grove. As I write this, on February 23rd, the first mild day for close on three months, in the wooded Strathmore the birds are beginning their mating songs; but these attempts are more like rehearsals for the grand concert of the spring. I fed my little friends every morning when they could get no food from Nature, and there grew up an affection between us as I looked forward to the time when they would reward me with their song. And there is a wise meaning for the instinctive interchange of affection between singing men and singing birds. There is a striking impulse which causes the songbird to get close to man,

the right of Lord Roberts's son, is Sirdar Muhammad Hyat Khan, a veteran comrade of Lord Roberts from the time of the Afghan War, who had been made a member of the Kashmir State Council, and to whose personal influence was largely due the reconciliation between the Maharaja and his brothers and the Government of India. Thus we see around the Maharaja four men—Lord Roberts, Rajah Amar Singh, Colonel Neville Chamberlain, and Sirdar M. Hyat Khan—than whom it would be difficult to select other four as tactful, able, and energetic. No wonder that under their influence—and it was by just such opportunities of friendly intercourse as these pig-sticking picnics at Jammu, organised by Sirdar M. Hyat Khan, that that influence was brought into full play—the Maharaja shook off his evil counsellors, and in due time resumed the government of a reformed State with a compact army of Imperial Service troops which have done yeoman service for the Empire, and of which the Government of India is justly proud. These things do not appear in Lord Roberts's



LORD ROBERTS IN INDIA.

record of services; but professed politicians have obtained name and fame for less.



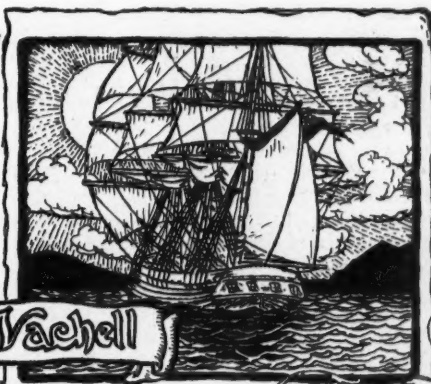
John Charity

A Romance of Yesterday

Containing certain adventures and love passages in Alta California of John Charity, yeoman of Cranberry Orcas in the County of Hampshire, England as set down by himself.

Edited by

Horace Amesley Vachell



CHAPTER XIII.

THE QUICKSANDS OF SANTA MARIA.

NEXT day we took the northern road, and, after climbing the Gaviota Mountain and passing through a very wild and sterile country, lay for the night at the mission of Santa Ynez, where we were most hospitably entertained by the good padres. Not far from this place a misadventure befel me. I had supped well, and was chatting with José Antonio Carrillo (who for a prisoner certainly made *bonne mine à mauvais jeu*) beneath the old mission arches, when a mestizo rode up on a horse lathered with sweat, and doffed his sombrero to my companion.

"Who is that?" said I, for the man had a noticeable face of the colour of old mahogany, illumined by a pair of black, beady eyes, the cruel and inquisitive eyes of a rat, deep set beneath coarse shaggy hair worn, as fashion then dictated, *à la furia*.

"I do not know," replied Carrillo. "*Madre de Dios!* he is ugly as sin."

The fellow dismounted, and then—seemingly for no reason—brutally kicked the poor jaded beast in the stomach. Carrillo snickered, for these Californians, so kind to humans, are no lovers of animals; and whether his snicker fired my wrath, or whether, which is more probable, some subtle instinct of antipathy possessed me, I cannot tell, but without thinking I sprang forward and hit the rascal so hard on the ear that he fell to the ground. However, he was on his feet again in a jiffy, and, drawing his puñal, attacked me fiercely. Whereat my companion also rose, and in a loud voice bade the man give pause, threatening him with a score of punishments. The fellow bowed humbly, sheathed his knife in his boot, and slunk away.

When I thanked Carrillo, he said, gravely, that a half-breed

never forgives an injury, and fears nothing on earth save the lash. "You are my gaoler," he concluded, "but I trust, señor, that no harm will come of this."

His concern touched me, and in company we smoked many cigaritos, talking well into the small hours, for I found this southerner a cheery and clever companion. Under his sombrero—so Alvarado had told me—lay the brains of the abajeños, and before starting His Excellency had bade me beware of a subtle tongue. "Be sure," said he, "that Carrillo will fish patiently and use many baits." Bearing this in mind, I left politics alone. We left the mission next day at an early hour, and travelled leisurely through a pretty, well-wooded country till we came to the Santa Maria river, where we camped for the night upon the banks of what was considered then, as now, the most treacherous stream in Alta California. At that season of the year the channel was almost dry, yet, where the water flowed, a cunning eye might detect smooth, slimy masses of shifting sand, crossing which a horse or steer would sink to the belly and surely perish, unless rescued at the end of a stout lariat. Here, our larder needing replenishing, and the river bottom being alive with game, I shouldered my rifle and sauntered down stream till I came to a place where the river forked. Upon the left bank was a bluff, the end of a spur of the foothills, and on the crest of the bluff, gloriously outlined against an opaline sky, stood a fine blacktail buck, fat as butter, with a head of horns that looked like a thick bush for the number of its points. I stalked him successfully, the sea breeze setting from him to me; and when I pulled trigger he lurched forward and fell crashing down the face of the bluff, as if sensible of the propriety of giving a hungry man as little trouble as possible. Now, between me and my quarry lay the river, into which I waded, holding my flier above my head. But I had not gone a dozen paces before I

found myself sinking in the soft sand, and after wallowing in this cursed quagmire, I soon realised that I was like to come to an inglorious end unless help was at hand. I yelled loud as Stentor, but, being far from camp, had but slim hope that my friends would hear me. And then, as I was straining my ears for a distant shout, I heard from the other bank a diabolical chuckle. I am not more superstitious than my neighbours, but on my word I thought that the fiend himself was mocking me. Such laughter, to a man in deadly peril, seemed inhuman. Yet, had it not been for that dreadful, triumphant "Ha! ha! ha!" I believe I had sunk, for it stirred my pulses to the most frantic efforts, and by dint of kicking and rolling I presently, to my great joy, struck bottom and soon lay, panting and exhausted but safe, upon a firm gravelly bar. Now I confess that I was badly scared, and, lying on the bar, I wondered whether the laughter had been a trick of fancy. My doubts on this point were increasing, when I heard the crack of a pistol and also the "zip" of a bullet singing by my ear, and burying itself in the earth not four inches to the left of my head. Although spent with my previous exertions, I began to roll again toward the thick sage brush and was tumbling into cover, when something like a slung shot seemed to smite my head, and my senses forsook me. I reckon that I must have lain there for half-an-hour. Then I became aware that I was still alive, although desperately sick and giddy. I had wit enough to crawl into the brush, and presently feeling for my wound found it on my head. The bullet had slit the skin, merely grazing the scalp, so after all I was more frightened than hurt. Doubtless my enemy—whoever he might be—counting me dead and fearing the treacherous sands, had left me to the buzzards. Soon the giddiness and the nausea left me, and in time I reached camp, a sorry-looking object, but none the worse for my misadventure.

José Carrillo, while dressing my wound (for he had skill in such matters), said that I was surely not destined to die in my boots.

The night following we lay at another mission, that of San Louis Obispo, so called from a mountain near the *pueblo* whose peak bears a curious resemblance to a bishop's mitre. This mission, one of the oldest in California, was charmingly situated upon rising ground, whence on three sides great pastures swept away in lovely undulations to the blue mountains that encircled them. I walked in the padre's garden, a pleasance fragrant with old-fashioned flowers—Castilian roses, St. Joseph's lilies, and the like—and marked many herbs and simples, some silvery olive trees, and a long, cool, vine-clad arbour, called an *emparado*. Here my wound was dressed again by a padre, who pronounced it to be healing with the first intention. Here, also, the chief people called upon our prisoners and openly condoled with them. 'Twas plain that John Charity was regarded as a pestilent fellow, and had it not been for the fierce aspect of my *soldados* (whose valour, to tell the truth, lay chiefly in their tongues' tip), a rescue might have been attempted. The prisoners, whom I had treated as friends, gave me their parole in exchange for certain amenities, but I made it clearly understood that anything in the nature of a scrimmage would lead to a massacre. In the teeth of this ultimatum I encountered more smiles than scowls.

After leaving the town of the bishop we approached the domains of Don Narciso Estrada, the lovely and fertile rancho Santa Margarita. To the right and left of us towered the Santa Lucia Mountains, the Trossachs of Southern California, and between these lay the Salinas Valley, studded with sycamores and huge live oaks, and knee-deep in lush clover and alfalfa. I began to understand why Castañeda had been so keen to marry a girl for whom he had no love; for indeed, to gain a title to so many and such fat acres a man might be tempted to make a covenant with the devil, let alone a young and handsome señorita. However, the sight of Magdalena's heritage pricked my pride till it smarted. The barrier between a penniless son of a yeoman and the heiress of the Santa Margarita seemed greater than the vast bulwark of mountains that lay between the Salinas and the Pacific. And so, for some time, the train of my thoughts burrowed into a gloomy tunnel, travelling none the less at a speed that promised me daylight, for I was sensible that I had my sweet lady's love, and also that Venus is ever kind to those who serve her faithfully and ardently.

Of course, José Carrillo was cognisant of what had passed in Monterey, and presently he turned this knowledge to account.

"Narciso Estrada is accounted one of the richest men in the country."

"I can well believe it, señor."

"The old fox is on the fence."

"The nearer to the grapes."

"Do you know why he betrothed his daughter to Castañeda?"

"The Mexican is of kin to Bustamente."

"True; but there were other reasons—reasons you can guess."

I understood him perfectly. From what had passed between us, I could no longer doubt that Castañeda was in league with the abajeños. These gentlemen were the aristocrats, the

cavaliers, so to speak, of Alta California, and, like them, intensely proud, arrogant, conceited, and ignorant of the true trend of events. José Carrillo was silent for a few minutes, then he said, slyly: "You have engaged the interest of the most powerful men in the North, señor, but had you landed at San Diego, or Los Angeles, *quien sabe*, you might now—"

"Have been a prisoner," I retorted, bluntly, for I could smell powder in such talk.

"A thousand pardons. I had no intention to offend. You came here in search of Fortune, you and your brother, Señor Valencia, and I frankly hope that you will find the lady. But I am not speaking beyond my brief when I profoundly regret that you did not land at San Diego, where we could have found you a rancho and a handsome wife to boot."

To this I made no reply. 'Twas plain he wished to bribe me. I remember that I marvelled why John Charity was seemingly regarded as a personage by these Californians. The secret leaked out later. Honest Jaynes, it seemed, had descanted freely of the glories of the Valencia family, of the wealth of Sir Marmaduke, of his friendship with the late king, and so on and so forth. 'Twas very generally believed, both at Monterey and Santa Barbara, that we were duly accredited agents from the Court of Saint James; spies, in fact, overlooking the Canaan of the Pacific.

Soon after we rode up to the ranch-house, and were received by Don Narciso with much ceremony and many protestations of esteem. The prisoners, being persons of quality, were made equally welcome and assigned good rooms. I noted, however, that at John Charity the old gentleman cocked a curious eye. I was bound to Sonoma, where his daughter was the guest of Vallejo, and he knew that with me duty and inclination marched abreast. I also marked that he talked apart with Carrillo, and drew many conclusions not flattering to my host's loyalty. Not a doubt remained in my mind that Alvarado, even in Monterey, was encompassed with spies and traitors. At dinner, none the less, I was seated at Estrada's right, and he showed me much attention, taking wine with me a number of times and entreating my opinion upon the quality of the liquors. Later, as we sat smoking upon the verandah, he engaged me in talk, and conversed amicably in a voice singularly sweet and flexible. I realised for the first time that he was the father of Magdalena, and did not forget that flies are caught with molasses.

"These family quarrels"—he was something of a euphuist—"are the curse of California. They give educated strangers, like yourself, señor, a false impression of the people and the country."

"The country is the finest on God's footstool, Don Narciso, and as for this quarrelling you speak of, egad! the best man has won, and now we shall have peace."

"You are young," he observed, drily, "and naturally of a sanguine disposition."

"Well," I retorted, thinking of Magdalena, "this world would be a sorry place without youth and hope."

"Hope has starved many a pretty gentleman. I prefer certainty."

"And I too, Don Narciso."

I made a shift to catch his eye, but in vain. As the devil would have it, we were interrupted by Estrada's major domo. The old fox—as Carrillo well named him—was about to break cover, and I felt that I had missed a run. But, after I had retired to a somewhat evil-smelling, windowless bedroom, and was pulling off my heavy riding-boots, he came discreetly to my door, asked civilly to be admitted, and, entering, assured me that his business would not take long in the telling. In my egregious vanity and inexperience of the Latin race, I believed that he felt more kindly toward me, and that my position in Alvarado's favour had modified his opinion of a young man whom he had no reason to suppose other than an adventurer. In short, I hoped that he had come to claim me as a son-in-law, wherein I was not much out, although approaching a sound conclusion from the side of folly rather than that of wisdom. For to my amazement, after pledging me to secrecy, he coolly offered me Magdalena's hand upon two conditions: the release of the prisoners in my charge, and the rupture of my relations with Alvarado. I was red-hot with rage before the words were out of his mouth, but I managed to say quietly: "Anything else, señor?"

"Is not that enough?" he demanded, insolently.

"You would give your daughter to a traitor. But the señorita does not love traitors, as you know—"

"You are a very foolish young man."

"No doubt."

"José Carrillo is a fool too."

"If he advised you to traffic with an Englishman's honesty, yes."

At the word Englishman he laughed grimly. Then he said with a sneer on his thin lips: "The Señor Valencia is not so particular."

"What!" I gasped.

"His sympathies are with us. He is of the nobility—as we are. You look incredulous, señor; but ask your friend, ask him, I say. And we have promised to protect his interests."

I was silent, overcome by what he said. For I dared not contradict him. Then I told him that Courtenay had sworn no allegiance to Alvarado, that he was free to choose his side; and yet the fact that he had so chosen without a word with me burnt like acid. Possibly the old Don fathomed my thoughts, for he added angrily: "Juan Bautista is using you as a tool; a spade wherewith to dig your grave and his own. D—n him!"

He was certainly angrier with himself than me. These Dons seldom plead for favours. He was "a beggar who had never begged before," and never would again—to me.

"Señor Don Narciso," said I, "you make it hard for me to remember that you are my host."

I had flicked him on the raw, for he drew himself up with great hauteur, bowed, apologised, and bade me good-night. When he had gone I began to laugh. Latin honour tickled Anglo-Saxon humour. That he had offered his daughter in exchange for my loyalty seemed to the Don a ha'penny matter; but a slight to a guest curved his backbone into an abject bow.

(To be continued.)



THE CAMELLIA AS A HARDY SHRUB.

THE Camellia has become so associated with the greenhouse and conservatory, that its value as a hardy shrub is likely to be overlooked, but its leafiness and flower beauty should save it from total neglect. We have received enquiries from time to time about its hardiness, and may say that in the southern parts of England, and, of course, Ireland, it is absolutely safe, whilst the bushes have grown to large dimensions in the Royal Horticultural Gardens at Chiswick, remaining uninjured during severe winters. The Camellia will stand harder frosts than the Laurel and the Laurustinus, a fact which will probably surprise those who regard it as quite a tender shrub. It is interesting to notice the effect that very hard winters have sometimes upon shrubs with brittle wood of the nature of the Camellia. Prolonged and severe frost will crack the branches and split them, and when this occurs the injured portion should be wrapped in hay-bands. Very often, however, the bushes are so leafy that the foliage touches the soil and protects the stems from injury. The Camellia requires a north wall, protection from cold winds, and a warm, thoroughly well-drained soil. June is the time to plant, and one may choose almost any variety. In Baron Schroeder's beautiful garden, The Dell, Egham, the famous double white variety lives out in the open, protection, we believe, only being given when the pure white flowers are in full beauty. This is essential to save them from absolute destruction.

PLANTING WATER-LILIES.

Once again the time has come round for planting the Nymphaeas, or Water-lilies, about which much has been written in COUNTRY LIFE. One can hardly say too much about this wonderful race of water flowers, hybrids raised, for the most part, by Mons. Latour-Marliac, and now offered by many English nurserymen. The advent of these remarkable hybrid Water-lilies is one of the most interesting features of English gardening during the Victorian era; they have given an entirely new beauty to the lake and pond, and made in very truth water gardens of the hitherto barren surface, unless some unwelcome weedy guest had covered the place which Lilies were in time to adorn. No one who has not seen the Nymphaeas in the sunshine of a July day can realise their splendour, big masses of petals floating upon the surface or poised on stems a few inches above the water—flower jewels—crimson, blood-red, yellow, sulphur, rose, pink, and tints so subtle and beautiful that one's thoughts turn to the delicate Tea Roses, so charming in their variety of colours. But our readers know our rapturous appreciation of the Nymphaeas. Let us add that April is the time to plant, and the way to proceed is: Have ready some loam and old mushroom-bed manure mixed together; this is to fill up the old baskets in which the plants are to be placed. Sink the baskets in a foot of water, and remember that, as in the garden proper, overcrowding is an evil. Keep the very small-growing kinds at the margin of the pond or lake, and the larger ones in the centre. Such robust kinds as Marliacea carnea, rosea, albida, and Chromatella may be put between 2ft. and 3ft. deep. Those about to begin Water-lily growing may like to know the names of, say, twelve of the most beautiful species and hybrids. Our selection would be as follows:

Nymphaea Marliacea albida.—A noble hybrid, as beautiful as a Viscountess Folkestone Rose; the flowers measure sometimes almost 1ft. across, glistening white, and very sweetly scented; it is of vigorous growth, and is of no use for a small tank.

N. M. Chromatella.—This is another hybrid of the same set as albida, but its fragrant flowers are soft canary yellow in colour, and quite as large as those of albida.

N. alba candidissima.—This, as the name suggests, is a variety of the beautiful Water-lily of English ponds and rivers; it is very charming, with pure white flowers and bright green leaves.

N. Laydekeri fulgens.—A remarkable flower, intense crimson in colour, with stamens as rich as garnets. This is not so vigorous in growth as the N. Marliacea group, and all the Laydekeri hybrids may therefore appeal more to those with small ponds, or even tanks and tubs.

N. odorata Exquisita.—The species is so fragrant that it is worth planting, but its variety Exquisita, one of the deepest in colour, a rose carmine, of the entire group, is very charming. Sulphurea, yellow, is very pretty too.

N. Robinsoni.—A hybrid of much value for its colour, which is difficult to describe, so resplendent are the shades.

N. pygmaea.—A miniature gem, so small that it is one of the species to grow in a tank where no pond or lake exists. When planted in a lake, keep it at the margin; the flower is of purest white, and in the variety Helveola canary yellow, with mottlings of brown upon the leaves.

N. Ellisiana.—A brilliant flower, described by the raiser, M. Latour-Marliac, as bright currant red; the fiery orange colour of the stamen has a very fine effect.

N. gloriosa.—This is another beautiful hybrid from the hands of the same raiser, and described as "a floating scented flower, 7in. in diameter, very double, and of perfect form; currant red washed with rose, white at the tips of the lower petals; stamens rich red. The only Water-lily which has regularly five sepals."

N. sanguinea.—A very richly-coloured flower, amaranth, set off by deep orange stamens.

N. Marliacea carnea.—We must not omit this flesh-coloured hybrid of the Marliacea group, although we prefer albida and Chromatella.

N. Seignoureti.—The flowers are a mingling of pink, yellow, and carmine, and appear a few inches above the water; the leaves are marbled with brown.

Water-lilies are not successful everywhere; they enjoy shelter, some calm lake not overshadowed, but surrounded with trees, such as that of Mr. Leopold de Rothschild at Gunnersbury House, Acton. Here they luxuriate, and rats are under control. On a sunny summer morning approaching midday the flowers are



Mrs. Delves Broughton.

A GARDEN IN COUNTY WICKLOW.

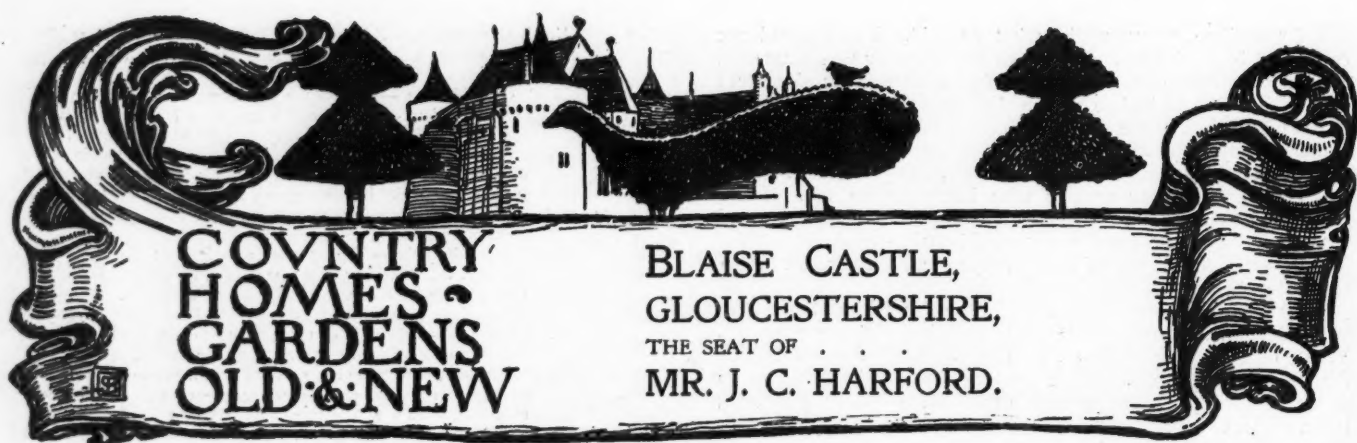
Copyright.

open wide, and, looking across the leafy floating groups, the scene is of Oriental splendour, obtained by crossing the Nymphaeas of the East with those of the Western world.

THE LARGER NETTED IRIS.

We have received flowers of this, the beautiful Iris reticulata major, from Messrs. Kelway and Son, Langport, Somerset, who write as follows: "This Iris is always so lovely with us every February and March, however cold the weather may be. It appears to be as easy to grow as the Crocus, and its violet fragrance in the warmth of a room is very sweet. There must be some hundreds of thousands of the two kinds in full flower (the type and the variety) in our nurseries at the present moment." Few flowers of the early year are more precious for their colour and fragrance than I. reticulata and I. major; their rich warm colour and sweet scent are delightful, and when in suitable soil the bulbs increase freely. We are surprised that more of these early-flowering bulbs are not grown in pots with Daffodils and other things.

CATALOGUES RECEIVED.—General catalogue of hardy plants, well illustrated: Guildford Hardy Plant Company. Garden Seeds: Richard Dean, Ranelagh Road, Ealing, W. Perennial Plants, etc.: John Peed and Son, West Norwood, S.E. Hardy Plants: V. N. Gauntlett and Co., Redruth. Seeds and Plants: Rivoire and Son, 16, Rue d'Algérie, Lyons. Potash Manures: F. W. Berk and Company, Limited, Fenchurch Avenue, London. Farm Seeds: Cooper, Taber, and Company, Limited, 90 and 92, Southwark Street, London, S.E.



A CHOSEN part of England is that which lies between the Cotswold Hills and the Severn, a land rich in foliage, where waving woods are interspersed with fruitful meadows, and the hills look out over prospects fair to behold. The spirit of rural life pervades the place, and the villages suggest some sweet idyllic charm. Orchards are their neighbours, and hedges, white with the thorn, and woodbine and honeysuckle embower them, roses climbing to their chimneys, and the gay rustic gardens are spread around. A land, one might say, for enchanted reverie. When has that land which extends north of Bristol and south again to the Mendip Hills not been favoured by men? Briton, Roman, Saxon, and Norman all knew this country well; it was their chosen dwelling-place, and it witnessed their feuds; having its place, too, in English history, and it is full of associations with famous men.

Thus do we find many fine seats of noblemen and gentlemen in the region, both of old and quite modern date, and many of a middle time. To this latter class belongs Blaise Castle, at Henbury, the substantial place we illustrate, built in 1795, and having all the character of a hundred years ago, when Englishmen loved the classic features, the columns, balustrades, and urns, the pediments and formal terraces, which the Renaissance

had bequeathed. Wealth was well expended at that time in giving England fine dwelling-places of noble aspect, which are exemplars, as it were, of the tastes, the life, and the ideals of our grandsires. Of course there had been houses here before, and a chapel dedicated to good St. Blaise. The fine trees of noble growth and stately avenues bespeak the care of a former day. There was a notable tower here in the days of George II., a famous look-out post, from which seven rich counties might in some measure be surveyed. Readers of "Northanger Abbey" will remember how Catherine Morland is driven hither in a curricule to view the place.

The Blaise Castle of 1795 is a fine and spacious house, built of a rich warm stone of orange hue, which enhances the effect of its classic detail, and contrasts well with the deep foliage and the rich glories of the summer garden. The chief approach is through a deep, wooded glen extending for nearly a mile, and the road winds onward with many a bend and curve, enchanting the wayfarer with its varied views of hill and dale, of glorious woodland, and of limestone scarp. The oak, ash, beech, yew, and wild cherry of these northern climes are contrasted with the solemn stone pine, the arbutus, and the dark cypress, brought from Italy some eighty years ago. Such are the things that





Copyright

A STATELY AVENUE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

charm the visitor to Blaise Castle. And, reaching the house, he is delighted with the broad sweep of the park, and the noble elms casting their lengthened shade. He likes to know that within the walls of the house are priceless treasures of art—choice examples of old masters, fine works of Hobbema and Vandyck, portraits by Lawrence, and many other delights for the eye.

But it is for us to look without, and that triple avenue of elms, the veterans of many a storm, standing still with battered crests, and flanks a little thinned, it may be, rivets

the gaze. Formerly it led right up to the lofty top of a weathered limestone crag looking out over the sheltered glen. The special features of the garden now claim our attention. Thus in the sheltered rose garden, into which the conservatory opens, we discover a fine Salisburia, the sacred tree of Japan, with its singular maidenhair leaves. This was one of the three specimens first brought over to England, and it is far better grown than its brother at Kew. The third specimen is at Wells. Until a few years ago there was also here a large Sophora,



Copyright

THE END OF THE TERRACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

that flowered nearly every summer.

The pool is filled with gold-fish, and gay with water-lilies. And here we may remark how great a change has come over English gardens in respect to water gardening. It is a real delight to find this phase of floriculture increasing, and each year some beautiful hybrid is raised with increased charm of colour and form. These lovely species and hybrids give new life to many a quiet English pool, lake, and pond. The

dairy garden is another beautiful resort, rich in varied foliage and flowers, and the thatched dairy is delightful in its picturesqueness. It is tinted within with shining tiles, and here busy hands produce the richest butter and spread the pans of scalded milk and cream. From the bright sunlight without it is pleasant indeed, in the summer days, to visit this cool resort. The dairy formed part of an old mansion, and the broad fireplace still retains the long notched bar for roasting meat. From the dairy garden we pass into the adjoining walled garden, which has a flower-edged walk leading to the west doorway of the ancient parish church with its twelfth century nave.



Copyright

THE EAST FRONT.

"COUNTRY LIFE"

From the elm avenue, through a tunnel beneath the road, a fruit garden is reached, and entered by arches cut in tall hedges of hornbeam. It is extremely interesting to know that herbaceous or hardy flowers, as one usually calls them, have existed always in the little strip beyond, even in the days of ribbon borders and potting out—pinks, pæonies, tall spikes of asphodel, Maiden's Blush roses, blue and white iris, and yellow day-lilies. How delightful such gardens are;

and, when the English gardens generally were given over to exotic plants, it must have been a refreshing experience for those who loved the old garden flowers to visit such restful little gardens as this, where the China roses scented the wind, the pæonies tumbled over the paths, bent with their weight of flowers, and the white pinks spread into silvery groups. Happily the days have again come when such pictures are usual, though, of course, exotic flowers have their right place in the garden, and, well used, afford keen pleasure by adding new beauties.

Passing through a doorway overhung with magnolia blossoms, we suddenly find a perfectly entrancing picture of rural



Copyright

THE SUNDIAL

"COUNTRY LIFE."



Copyright

COTTAGE AND DOVECOTE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

life in ten gabled cottages clustered about a green. They were built by John Scandrett Harford, Esq., in 1809, from Nash's designs, and the architect carried out a quaint idea of preventing gossip by arranging that a woman standing in her doorway should not be able to see any of the other nine doors. But he did more. He produced such cottages as seem to embody the very spirit of rural life. Picturesqueness is in their varied aspect, and in delightful outline, and in the shadow of their deep overhanging eaves, not less than in the sweet and rustic gardens that surround them, they are extremely charming. Colour and form are alike as they should be, and these cottages satisfy the artistic sense

by completeness and by contrast and variety. They suggest domestic peace; the leaping light of the rural fireside and the whirr of the spinning-wheel in winter; the scented kine and the laden wain when the summer wind blows; the laughter of children and the sager talk of the old, for here may we think the circle of life to be. The tall pump on the green covers a spring that never fails in the driest summers, and its dial at the crest adds much to the picture. Three young cedars planted near were grown from cones picked up by Miss Harford, when riding across the Lebanon in 1881. The inhabitants of these charming cottages are usually old retainers of the family, and

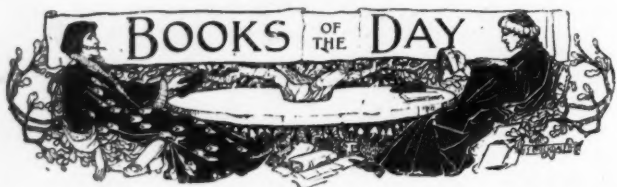


Copyright

A BEAUTIFUL COTTAGE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

when pensioned often live to a great age. Then are they carried to the neighbouring churchyard, where generations of villagers sleep. Where could we find a more suggestive picture of the inner life of the rustic Englishman?



THE lines which follow are devoted to two books which have a good deal in common; and their community is this. First of all, neither of them can be called literature in the strict sense of the word, but one of them goes very near to it. Secondly, both of them are somewhat heavy in the hand, a ponderous feature which is apparently inseparable from really good reproduction of illustrations, but neither of them is heavy in the reading, which, of course, matters a great deal more. Thirdly, which is also lastly, they are both of them simply indispensable to any self-respecting owner or occupant of a country house. Of the first of them I happen to know the genesis and the evolution. In fact, the

sometimes in a semi-suburb, now at last in both combined, and at the worst in a window-box; but a gardener, and a man who could make things grow always. What I desire is that the experts should tell me exactly what to do, and that they should tell it in language which may be understood of the people—meaning by people me." It sounds simple, but it was really a very difficult problem. First, to quote the classical recipe, Mr. Cook had to catch his experts. Then he had to induce them to write in such fashion that all, even the most humble of us, could understand. He has succeeded admirably in carrying out both designs. He has induced Mrs. Earle—Mrs. Earle of "Pot Pourri"—to write on shrub borders and upon hardy flowers; he has persuaded Mr. F. W. Burbidge, of the Botanical Garden at Trinity College, Dublin, to enlist himself under his banner; he has enrolled Mr. S. W. Fitzherbert on mixed borders and rock gardens; he has given us a really excellent article by Mr. William Paul, of Waltham Cross, on roses and rose gardens; Mr. Edward Mawley, the hon. secretary of the Rose Society, has had his say upon exhibition roses; Mr. James Douglas, of Edenside, discourses on carnations—and if there is anybody who knows more I should like to meet him and his carnations; Mr. Edwin Beckett discusses the chrysanthemum; and orchids are treated by Mr. W. H. White, orchid grower to Sir Trevor Lawrence, Bart., who is also president of the Royal Horticultural Society. Of ferns, hardy and exotic, Mr. Charles T. Drury speaks, and nobody knows more about them; and of trees and shrubs, Mr. W. J. Bean, of the Royal Gardens at Kew. Mr. Edwin Beckett again treats vegetables. In a word, it is a "verie parfit gentle" book, but its virtues are not yet exhausted. To start with the balance of the virtues, there are a large number of anonymous articles, which are none the worse for being anonymous, and are, in fact, first-rate. Next, the book answers the purpose of the amateur enquirer. Confronted with a problem—e.g., when



Copyright

BLAISE CASTLE: COTTAGE AND GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

subject is one on which I have had the honour of being consulted. I was asked whether there was room for a book about gardens and about gardening. The answer was in effect that there were acres, and even square miles, of room, but that the book would take a great deal of writing. I am myself a lover of the garden, and a person who has views, which I venture to believe to be sound, on matters connected with it. I was asked whether in my opinion there was a thoroughly satisfactory book dealing with the subject, and my answer was that there might be, but that I had not fallen across it. For really what one wants is something quite out of the way. One wants a book which will at the same time gauge one's ignorance and one's knowledge; a book which will give one credit for knowing something without assuming that things about which one is in blissful ignorance are really quite familiar. Let me put it in other words, and say that a gardening book was wanted which should at one and the same time talk shop, without permitting the shop to be detected, and be so written that the ordinary lover of the country and of his own dear concerns should be able to understand and to follow it. And that, really, is precisely what is present in "The Century Book of Gardening," a comprehensive work for every lover of the garden, edited by E. T. Cook (not of the *Daily News*, but of the *Garden*), and published in this very house, known as 20, Tavistock Street, Covent Garden. In fact, "The Century Book of Gardening" is the beginning, and the very excellent beginning, of the COUNTRY LIFE Library. The recipe for its production was simplicity itself in the matter of enunciation, and complication embodied in the matter of fulfilment. Or, to put the matter frankly and candidly, which it is sometimes prudent as well as honest to do, it was easy to set out the problem, but quite another thing to solve it. And I set it myself. I said, "Take me. I am the awful or the typical example; call it which you will. I have always been a keen gardener, sometimes in a country house,

shall I sow this seed or strike this cutting?—he can solve it at once by referring to what is practically an encyclopædia of gardening lore; and he will never refer in vain. With the help of the capital index he will find his difficulties removed, and he will find the explanation of them always lucid and right. On the whole, having been a keen gardener ever since I could walk, and a consulter of gardening books in later years, and a man who knows the whole lot of them, I have no hesitation in declaring this one to be far and away the best for general purposes.

The next and last book to be mentioned is "The Game Birds and Wild-fowl of the British Islands," by Charles Dixon, with a number of coloured plates by Charles Whymper (Pawson and Brailsford, Sheffield). Under Mr. Dixon's name, which, of course, is a password, the publishers print five lines of catalogue of the books which he has written. With characteristic modesty they fail to make mention of their own exploits. Yet one of them was, in the ornithological way, more than considerable. It was the production of Mr. Seebohm's famous book on British birds' eggs, and that is an ornithological classic. This book will be the same. The illustrations are almost inconceivably good. The metallic sheen on the cock pheasant on the frontispiece and the red grouse facing page 35 are as bright as bright can be. In fact, there is only one fault to be found with the book. It has forty-one coloured plates, representing fifty-six coloured illustrations, drawn specially for the edition. I wish there were 141, and for a plain reason. I am a sportsman and a naturalist, both in a small way of course. When I have seen a really good picture of a bird—and all these are out of the way good—I can recognise the bird again always. But I cannot do so for a certainty when, as is necessarily the case when mere words have to serve the needs of description, it becomes necessary to talk of the birds' inside. Besides, it is not possible to ascertain what the inner parts of a bird—the sternum, the thigh bones, and so forth—are really like until the bird has not only been shot,

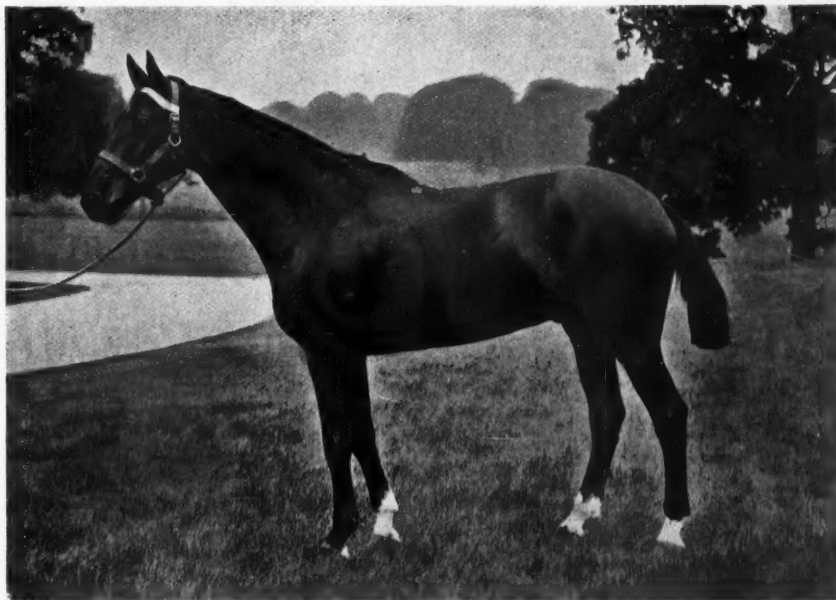
or brought to ground otherwise, but also dissected. Pictures appeal to me, and I should like, for example, to have seen in this book pictures of the Demoiselle crane and other birds in the same grade of rarity, lest I should shoot them in a rash moment. But this is ingratitude. It is really a beautiful book, and it ought to be in the possession of every sportsman, for it is not by any means often that one comes upon a book in which the letterpress is by so distinguished and so absolutely careful a man, or in which the illustrations are so beautiful and by so precisely accurate a man. Mr. Dixon and Mr. Whympere are born naturalists, and they have devoted to their hobbies a lifetime of loving study. The result is sheer and unadulterated delight, and I have seldom met a case in which the printer's art has responded so exquisitely to the efforts of author and artist. The cover, too, is very good. In general hue it is a subdued khaki, and the design, which is very pleasing, is rendered in modest tones. The khaki, I learn, is an accident. It had been decided upon long before Mr. Kruger had delivered his ultimatum; but it is at least in the

fashion, and it is a little less jaundiced in hue than some of the khakis which one sees on the ubiquitous Imperial Yeoman and even in ladies' dresses. To two further and specific points attention may very well be devoted. Of particular interest to me is the introduction, and, in it, especially the parts which deal with what I may call intra-insular migration. That is a matter to which Mr. Dixon has devoted himself with great assiduity, and the result is some very interesting reading. Again, the notes upon the various breeds of pheasants are of great interest to me. No person with eyes to see can have failed to notice when the pheasants are laid out at luncheon-time—when the shoot is over it is usually too dark to distinguish much—how many are the varieties in appearance of the birds which have risen and fallen in the same group of coverts. To know something of the origin of the various races which have gone to make the pheasants which stock our woods adds greatly to the pleasure of the day, and now, unless I commit the heinous sin of forgetting, I shall, thanks to Mr. Dixon entirely, and to Mr. Whympere in part, know all.

The Duchess of Newcastle's Hunters.

"Here's a health to every sportsman, be he stableman or lord,
If his heart be true, I care not what his pocket may afford;
And may he ever pleasantly each gallant sport pursue,
If he takes his liquor fairly, and his fences fairly too.
Then fill your glass, and drain it too, with all your heart and soul,
To the best of all sports—the foxhunt—the fair ones, and the bowl,
To a stout heart in adversity through every ill to steer,
And when fortune smiles a score of friends, like those around us here."
—"Hunting Song," ADAM LINDSAY GORDON.

TO anyone who had to pass through London during the semi-tropical heat of its August days last year, the relief to get away out of the glare of its streets was inexpressible. Even the crowds and confusion of its big railway stations were welcome, for were they not the purgatory through which we all had to pass to get to our different paradises? The paradise for which I was making on one scorching day was Clumber—my idea of an earthly one, with its royal supply of horses and dogs that go so far to make an earthly paradise perfection; and, indeed, if we do not find many of our old animal friends in the heavenly one, it will be incomplete. This by the way, as I have not yet reached Clumber. When I arrived at Retford and found the Clumber carriage waiting, I gave a sigh of relief, for I knew the glorious drive that lay before me, and as we bowled rapidly along on a seven-mile drive and left the streets of Retford behind, my spirits rose as we emerged into the open country, where rabbits abounded, and on through the wooded lanes leading to the celebrated lime-tree avenues through which we approached Clumber. The memory of that lovely twilight drive, with the scent of the lime blossom in full bloom coming in at the carriage window, will always remain with me, as it must have done with anyone whose love of Nature is as great as mine.



T. Fall.

NEVILLE.

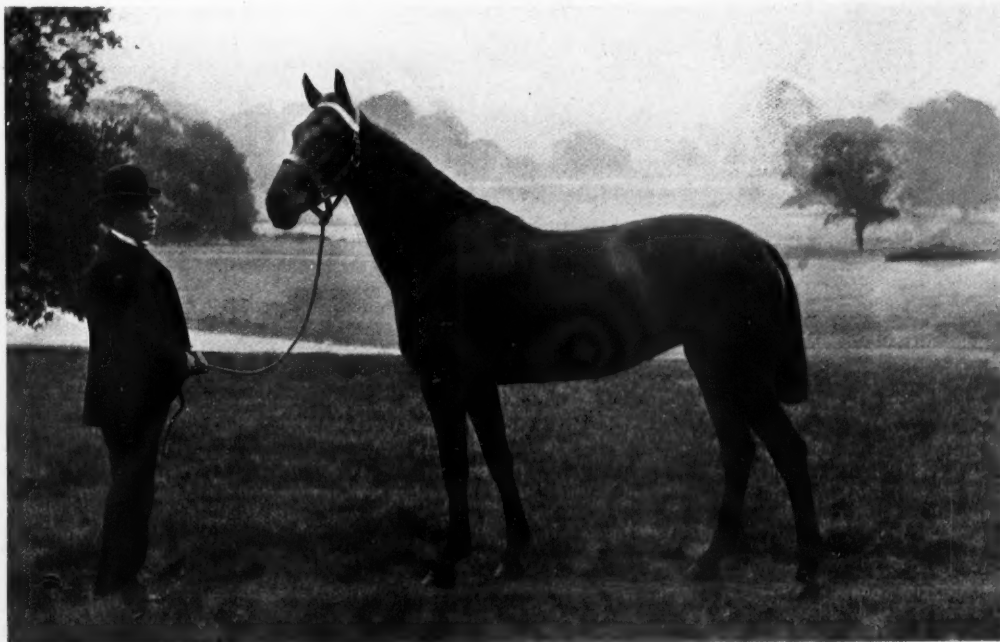
Copyright

But all pleasant things must come to an end, though seldom to such an agreeable one as mine did on this August night, for when I arrived the cordial welcome of the charming young Duchess greeted me. I had just time to change my clothes and go down to dinner at eight. The dogs were delighted to see me, and after dinner I had various conversations with them.

Velsk was looking charming, but grumbling a good deal about Natty, who, he told me, was the plague of his life. In fact, the words were hardly out of his mouth when Natty bustled into the hall, where we were sitting. She gave me a glance when she came in, and stopped short. "Is it?—Yes, it is! By

Jove! I am pleased to see you, old chap! What's the news?" And with this remark, and a spring, she landed on my knee. I said, "Rats, Natty!" upon which she tore round like a mad thing, and endeavoured to unearth the Duchess, who was sitting peaceably at the opposite end of the sofa reading the newspaper, and after a general scrimmage she was dropped into the waste-paper basket by the Duke on his way to the billiard-room, and peace reigned for a time.

Nags was looking very well. He told me that he had made permanent arrangements with the Duchess never to enter *him* for another show, unless there was one at Clumber. He said "that the very thought of Ranelagh put him off his feed for a week." He assured me that occasionally, when stretched on the most comfortable sofa in the hall just dropping off to sleep, he would wake up with a



T. Fall.

GOOD GIRL.

Copyright

shudder as he thought of that wooden bench and the straw at Ranelagh. Here I told Nags that though on former visits my principal objects of interest had been Her Grace's dogs, upon whose beauty and many perfections I have often dilated, this time it was her famous stud of hunters that I had been specially invited to inspect. So, with a sigh and "*à demain!*" the dear old dog betook himself to his sofa at the other end of the hall, and settled himself down to sleep.

During the evening the Duchess told me many interesting stories about her hunters and about past hunting days, when as a little girl she followed the hounds with the Quorn, and afterwards in Leicestershire, on a thoroughbred chestnut named Rob Roy, by Fairy Saint. He was a grand horse, who was bought by Her Grace's mother, the Hon. Mrs. Candy, when he was a three year old, and hunted by her that season in Ireland. After that she brought him over to England, where he hunted with the Quorn, Belvoir, Cottesmore, and also in County Meath for nine seasons, when he was transferred to her little daughter. The late lamented Empress of Austria so much admired Rob Roy and the way in which he acquitted himself with the Quorn when that beautiful and fearless horse-woman followed poor "Bay Middleton's" lead with the famous and historic pack, that she offered 500 guineas for him. Needless to say this was refused; as was another of 800 guineas from Mr. Gordon Bennett. Mrs. Candy cared for her good horse too dearly to part with him under any circumstances.

The Duchess of Newcastle's love for following the hounds is another of the proofs of the influence of heredity. Her mother, the Hon. Mrs. Candy, has hunted with the best packs in England and Ireland for more than thirty years, beginning with her elder brother's (the late Lord Rossmore) pack of harriers in Ireland; with them she still laughingly affirms that she had many a good run and also many a good spill. Mrs. Candy's first day with the Quorn Hunt was in 1867, when she was

into the lovely little chapel, so reverently cared for by the Duke and Duchess, and showing in every respect—from the beautiful flowers on the altar to the brass, polished until you could see your face in it, and not a speck of dust to be seen anywhere—how much attention was bestowed upon it. There is the most perfect sense of rest inside this beautiful little church; every scrap of colouring is in perfect harmony, which is not always the



T. Fall.

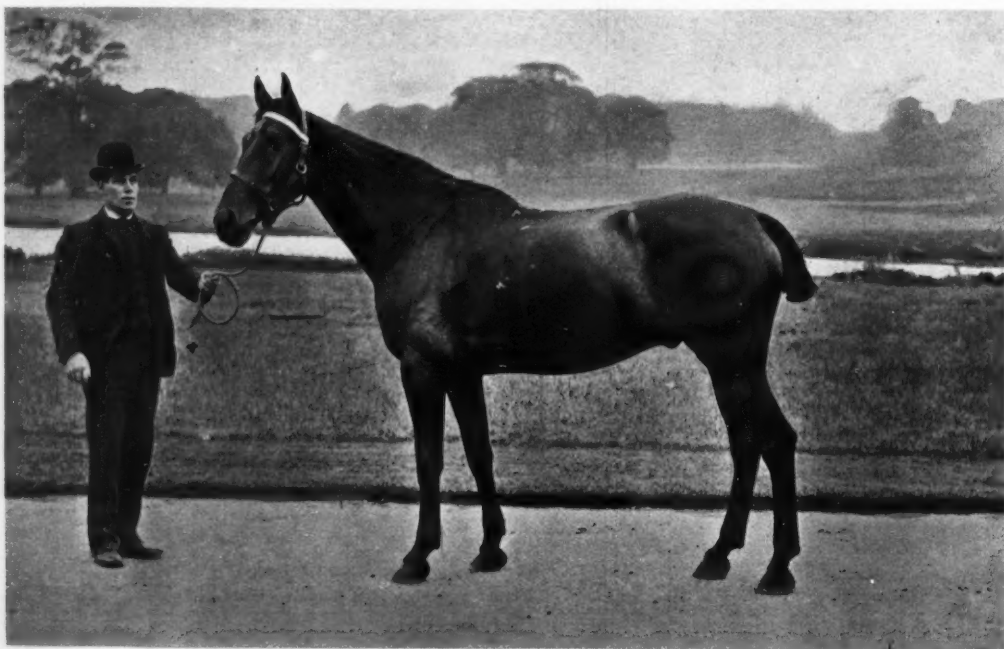
ANNIE II.

Copyright

case in some of our richly decorated churches. I could easily have spent the day there examining all its perfect details.

On my return to the house I found Mr. Fall had arrived on the scene, and we all went out to see the splendid stud of hunters led out one after another into the park to be photographed. Natty accompanied us to look on—this was the general idea; what she really did was to endeavour to get herself into every photograph that was taken. Being choked off that little game, she thought she would have a rabbit from one of the coverts. This, however, I explained to her, was not Her Grace's idea when she brought her out; and I produced a pocket-handkerchief which I tied round her neck in the form of a lead. At this last

insult Natty burst out with some very strong language: "Every Jack and Jill of you," she said, "go off and hunt on your own account a poor little red fox—dozens of you together; but when I have managed to get a single companion like Velsk, and the pair of us go out for an hour, there is as much fuss as if a miserable rabbit were worth fifty pounds. It's the one thing the Duchess and I fall out about—she is most inconsiderate, and I never can make out how she finds out where I've been; it's 'Natty, you little scamp, you've been hunting again.' Right or wrong, I get the credit of hunting if I only put my nose out of doors for a constitutional. There's inconsistency for you!" And after this outburst she settled down quietly on my knee as I lay on the grass watching the hunters come out. Among the first favourites of the Duchess is her grand hunter NEVILLE, who has carried his fair mistress gallantly for the



T. Fall.

DING DONG.

Copyright

staying at Donnington, the late Marquess of Hastings' place. The Marquess invariably gave her his best horses to ride, and at that time Mrs. Candy went out five or six times every week, and still continues the sport for three or four half-days out of each week during the season, when the Duchess continually stays with her mother and goes out with her.

The following morning, directly after breakfast, I went out

last two seasons, and both horse and rider were looking forward to the time when they should be again in the "first flight," and tasting keenly one of the sports which make life worth living.

"Oh! the vigour with which the air is rife!
The spirit of joyous motion;
The fever, the fulness of animal life,
Can be drained from no earthly potion.

The lungs with the living grow light,
And the limbs feel the strength of ten,
While the chest expands with its
madd'ning might,
God's glorious oxygen."

Neville (so called after his breeder in Ireland) was bought by the Duchess from Mr. Burke. He comes of distinguished parentage, being by Coracle, a son of Hermit, who won the Derby in a snowstorm in 1867, one which will always be remembered and talked of by racing men as "Hermit's year." His dam is by Chit Chat, another well-known racer. Neville is a black horse with three white feet, and is, as his portrait shows, of magnificent proportions.

Extremely beautiful and graceful is the bay mare GOOD GIRL, and one can see at even a passing glance that she is teeming with quality. She is a big mare, a wonderful jumper, and a fine galloper, yet very temperate. She had only been hunted by the Duchess one season, but in that time she had proved herself to be a good one. She is by Bon Frère out of a Torpedo mare. ANNIE II. is a chestnut mare with a white blaze. She is as delightful a colleen as any lover of Ireland and its most fascinating people and animals could wish to meet. She was bought by Her Grace from Mr. Burke, Master of the Tipperary Hounds, and came to the Clumber stables with a grand reputation, which she continues to live up to. She has won her laurels many a time on the race-course, and anyone who has ever seen racing in Ireland knows what stiff courses they are. In 1897 she won the Tally-ho! Gold Cup, also the Kildare Hunt Cup, and in the following year carried off the United Hunt Cup. She is a great favourite in her new home, as she is very fast and at the same time very quiet and temperate.

DING DONG is a new horse as far as Clumber is concerned. He had not very long been purchased by the Duchess from Lord Harrington, and Her Grace had had no personal opportunity of testing his powers in the hunting-field; but Lord Harrington, who hunted with him for two years, gave him a capital character, and said that during that time he was never sick or sorry and always game. THE LAMB is a ten year old, by Tally-ho! who has been ridden by the Duchess for several seasons, and is one of her special favourites. He has marvellous staying powers, and will go on all day at the same pace. Just before he was bought by his present owner he won the Farmers' Race at Retford. He is as handsome as he is game. His colouring is dark brown.

How much I enjoyed my inspection of the Duchess of Newcastle's hunters can only be fully appreciated by those who have lived with and loved horses and hunting all their lives, and with whom it is an inherited passion, as it is with so many English and Irish men and women, in spite of the outcry raised



T. Fall.

THE LAMB.

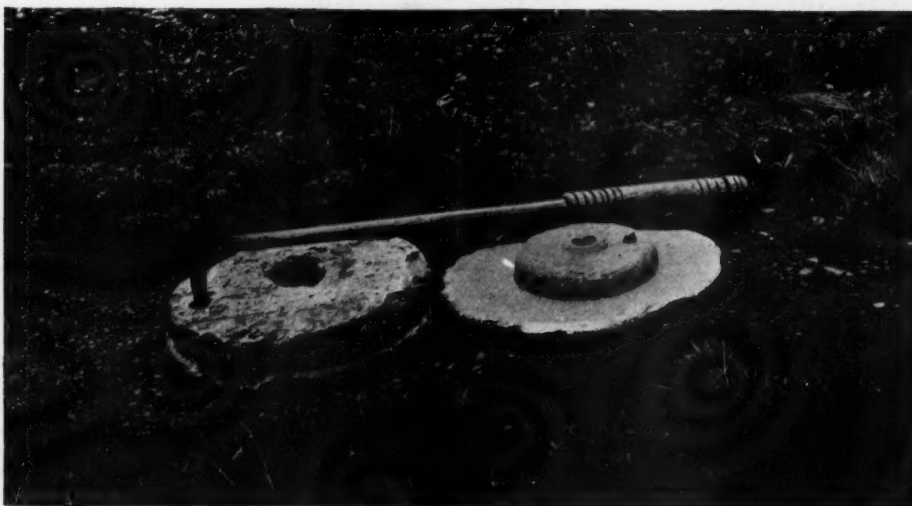
Copyright

against it by some faddists of to-day, and I and many others feel the truth of poor Lindsay Gordon's beautiful lines. Some of us will go even further than this poet, and say with another poet, whom Australia claims as her own, who sings of one of their noted race-horses:

"Pardon, the son of Reprieve,
When he dies then I hope I may follow,
And go where the race-horses go.
I don't want no harping or singing,
Such things with my style don't agree,
Where the hoofs of the horses are ringing
There's music sufficient for me.
"And surely the thorough-bred horses
Will ride up again, and begin
Fresh races on far-away courses,
And p'raps they might let me slip in.
And if they have racing hereafter,
(And who is to say they will not?)
When the cheers, and the shouting, and the laughter
Proclaim that the battle grows hot,
As they come down the race-course a-steering,
He'll rush to the front, I believe,
And you'll hear the great multitude cheering
For Pardon, the son of Reprieve."

But the pressure of everyday life leaves but little space for vague speculations about a shadowy future; and hunger now asserted herself. The pleasant morning in the open air had given us all such appetites that we did more than justice to an excellent lunch. A delightful drive in the afternoon (with the irrepressible Natty on my knee to give piquance to the occasion) Her Grace driving a game little pair of cobs bred by her at Clumber, brought the day to its eventide, and another pleasant evening ended a delightful day.

ULTIMA THULE.—IV.



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

QUERNS.

Copyright

AMONGST interesting people who at one time or other have visited the Shetlands we certainly ought not to fail to make mention of the devil, who was there as lately as the eighteenth century, and very possibly since. There is no doubt at all about his visitations, for they are related at length and in detail by the Reverend John Mill (not the logician and political economist) in a book called "A Shetland Minister in the Eighteenth Century." It is practically an edited version of the minister's own diary. It relates, amongst other things, that the devil appeared at his Communion table, and was only at length driven off by an exhortation in Gaelic, after several other languages had been tried without success—a result which ought to strengthen not a little the hands of those who are working for the retention of Gaelic in Highland board schools. After this it

appears that the "puir deil" showed a special spite against the reverend gentleman, invariably causing the wind to blow full in his face, which was no light vexation as he walked over his extensive parish, and a positive danger when he visited the outlying islands, such as Foula. Later mariners have noticed the same circumstance, especially when they have wanted to cross the Pentland Firth, whence there seems reasonable inference that the devil has not yet done with Ultima Thule. Mr. Mill was a native, and a good man according to his own showing—and who could know him better? It was a saying in Shetland at that time that all they owed to Scotland was "dear meal and bad ministers." No doubt this was an expression of local prejudice that found much satisfaction in the antics and the devil fights of the Reverend John Mill.

The meal, which the intercourse with Scotland made dear, was no doubt universally at that time ground by QUERNS. It is said that they are used in some parts of Shetland even now, but I have not seen them. The quern, as a grinding instrument, is of great antiquity and nearly universal use. In the East it is still used, whether in the Shetlands or no. The principle of the arrangement is to have one stone lying on another; the top stone has a hole in the middle, the lower a corresponding hump. The one stone is fitted on the other, a stick by way of axle is put through the hole in the top stone, which is then



C. Reid.

IN THE NURSE'S ARMS.

Copyright.

turned round by means of a peg near its circumference, the grain being meanwhile poured in through the hole and coming out as meal round the circumference of the stone. This, roughly, as far as I can understand, is the *modus operandi*.

Round and about the Shetlands you may happen to have the luck to see one of those spectacles which is among the most wonderful that the ocean has to offer to those who "go down to the sea in ships" but occasionally. Those who habitually "occupy their business in great waters" with the herring fleet become so used to it, that it ceases to impress them much. This great sight is what is meant by a shoal of herrings. The herrings are not the sight, for you do not see them, but they are the occasion of the sight. The sight consists in the wonderful number and variety of the sea-birds that are collected over the bodies of these unfortunate fish, of whom but one individual out of many million eggs is said to come to maturity. The herrings do not always swim about on the top of the water. If they did, the life of a sea-bird would be too sinfully joyful for this world. Unfortunately for the sea-birds and the herring-fishers, the herrings pass a good deal of their time in deep waters, where no doubt they become the prey of something, for this appears to be the end and aim of their existence; but the birds, except the diving birds perhaps, do not catch them there. So when the fish do come up to the surface, then it seems as if all the birds in



C. Reid, Wickham, N.B.

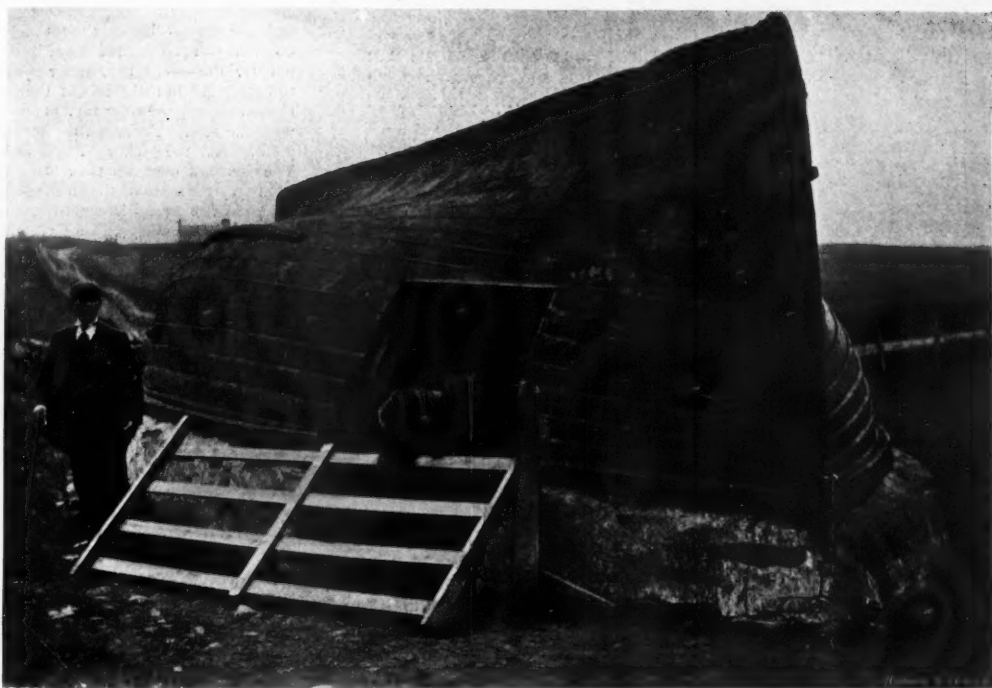
SCENE IN HARBOUR

Copyright

the world had made up their minds to dine together at that spot. Your boat goes through myriads of clamouring gulls of all descriptions, that will not leave you till your boat has come to the harbour, when they will clamour with unappeased appetite for the refuse as the fish are cleaned. As you go along, the surface of the water is covered with birds that are less ready than the gulls to take to wing. These are chiefly of the guillemot, razor-bill, and puffin kind, that will sit so closely after the heavy fish dinner, that only with the greatest reluctance will they rise. Generally they will prefer to dive out of the boat's way as its bows come almost upon them, a process that one would think was a severe strain on the pipes after such gastronomic efforts. If they do take to flight at all, it generally means that they go scudding over the water's surface till they meet a wave, fail to rise above its crest, and, after toppling over into its trough, give up all further aerial attempts. The gulls are screaming, swooping down, sitting on the water, rising up again, busy as a hive of bees all the time, and in their midst the dark skuas are hawking them, cutting their way through them with falcon-like flight. It is a sight, once seen, that the landsman is not likely to forget. And only a little less remarkable—less remarkable in degree, but no less remarkable in kind—is the SCENE IN HARBOUR when the boats have come to anchor and the cleaning operations are in progress.

It seems that more and more people go to the Shetlands each year, as the numbers increase of those who are keenly interested in angling. Sea-trouting in the voes and lochs is the great entertainment for the angler that the islands give him, and there is some good sea-fishing. The sea-trout themselves will sometimes take fly readily on the salt water voes, as Sir Edward Grey sets forth so well in his charming book on fishing.

The climate of the islands is not severe, in the sense that the thermometer speaks of severity. The cold is not often intense, considering the northerly latitude—for about five hours



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

A BOAT STABLE.

Copyright

life, they yet thrive certainly no less well in fatter pastures and gentler climates. They are very accommodating little creatures.

They do not even show any great resentment when they are huddled together, with scant ceremony, on shipboard, to go from island to island or to the mainland of Scotland. They pass so much of their lives, no less than the whole of them in most cases, with the sea breezes blowing in their nostrils and the sound of the surges in their ears that, perhaps, they learn to look on it as a less alien element than most of the equine kind. They are scarcely, in their infancy, to be called equine. The Sheltie ponies seem more like some friendly kind of really not very big dog, most easily to be taken up and hugged IN THE NURSE'S ARMS.

When they are stabled, more likely than not the stable will be constructed of an old boat up-turned, with a stable doorway cut in it, out of which the little faces peering strike the unaccustomed beholder with a strange sense of incongruity. A BOAT STABLE of this kind is very likely to have been the nursery

of the young Sheltie, so that the smells of shipboard, the herring and the tar, will not seem altogether strange to him when he comes to years of voyaging discretion. It is really too bad if we have taken away all the best specimens of the breed and the native ponies are decreasing in stature and quality accordingly. That is said, but we trust not truly said. At least, it is not too late to give back with interest what we have taken, by sending them in some fresh blood. Except as children's ponies and for use in the mines there is usually not much solid value in the SHELTIES, but where larger steeds are not available, as in their native islands, they are, as we have seen, invaluable, lightening the handwork of the women by bringing home the peat or the purchases from the market, thereby leaving the women's busy hands free for the



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

SHELTIES.

Copyright

only, in the summer, is the sun below the horizon—but it is severe enough by the standard of rain and wind storms, and the islands have no shelter other than their own highlands give. Yet the little ponies, herding together, live out all the year round. It is at least very exceptionally that they are stabled or given any other protection than is afforded by the stone dykes or the natural accidents of the land. Yet they thrive on it, and it is not a little curious that, thriving as they do on their native hard

ceaseless work of the knitting needles, and helping in the thousand and one ways that equine service can help a semi-crofting and semi-fishing people. They are a pleasant and a thrifty people, living no easy life in no easy conditions of climate. If we have taken the best of their ponies from them, let us give them back what we can in return; and if the industry that makes up the peculiarly soft wool into the delicate shawls and things is threatened by the machine-made articles

that are multiplied so easily, let us do what we can to help the handiworkers of the islands by taking their goods, as we can take them, on terms advantageous both to us and them, through the medium of the Scottish Home Industries, which is so well doing an excellent work.



THE season is drawing rapidly to a close; Melton is already looking empty, and the various items of hunting society are beginning to scatter. A few of us are going to the New Forest to enjoy the picturesque sport of spring stag-hunting and to see a late fox killed. Not a May fox, for very few packs do that now. For the real lover of hunting, in its wilder aspects, the New Forest has a charm, and if any of my readers wish to try it, and will write to me through the Editor of COUNTRY LIFE, I will tell them where to go and where to hire (if they do not want to take their own) animals which are used to the forest. The question of what to do with hunters in the off season now arises, and the old controversy between summering in boxes or on a pasture comes up again. I believe in a compromise, that is to say, when the ground is not too hard and the grass too rich I like to turn horses out in the morning and evening, taking them up in the middle of the day and feeding them fairly well, so that they shall not fill themselves up too much with grass. Wet weather and cold winds are never good for hunters to be out in.

What sort of season has it been? Sport has been like the weather, intermittent and variable. While there have been some days, notably with the Quorn, Lord Harrington, and the Cottesmore, quite first-rate, yet the average sport of the season has not been so good as usual. There have been, perhaps, more days than last year on which hounds could not run at all. Of hunting drawbacks, mangle has been less noticeable and I should be glad to think that this scourge is dying out in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. About wire I cannot trust myself to write, nor do I think that there is a great diminution of this curse of modern agriculture. The actual existence of the strands of wire is not the worst part of it. It is the feeling towards hunting of which it is the sign. If in a good hunting country, where the sport is one of the traditions of the neighbourhood, there is enough wire to interfere with riding to hounds seriously, and that wire is neither taken down nor carefully flagged, it is a sign of hostility in the hearts of landowners and farmers, or of an indifference which is not very distinguishable from active dislike. The wire question is, in the secret opinion of some of us, far more serious than we like to confess even to ourselves. Now to gather up the threads of sport of the last week. A good many packs will leave off early this year. It has been an open season, and our servants, horses, and hounds have been severely taxed. Two or three hunt stables have been sufferers from influenza, notably the Quorn and the Hambledon. On Tuesday came the last day with Mr. Baird and Gillson for the present writer, after twenty seasons' happy sport. There seems to be a certain amount of unrest in the hunt about the coming changes. No one can regret the necessity for changes more than I do, but they are inevitable in the natural course of things, and the best and wisest course is to give hearty support to the new Master and huntsman, so as to ensure the continuance of the splendid sport and good feeling which have marked the last twenty seasons. The fixture was Tilton Stonepits, and the cold, uncomfortable wind which has made the last few weeks miserable was keen enough to make the ride to covert less of a pleasure than usual. No fox in Tilton, and apparently two lines in Skeffington Wood. When Gillson had got his pack together and settled them on the line of their fox, from Skeffington to Billesdon was the line, and a very good line, too, if the fox had run straight, but he did not. Even better was the prospect as the pack swung round under Billesdon Windmill and headed away for the Skeffington Vale. But all the way the fox had been gaining on hounds, the latter working out a good many turns with a very moderate scent. By degrees it became plain that the scent was dying away. The pauses were longer, each drive forward came to an end sooner than the last, and at length hounds lifted their heads and looked on Gillson as much as to say, "Let us go and find another; this one is no good." This is exactly what we did do. We trotted back to the woodlands, and were soon running over the rough country with its deep bottom, its woodland dells, and rough, steep hills, which might be Buckinghamshire, or anywhere, in fact, but Leicestershire or Rutland. A turn round Loddington and back, a moment's breathing space in the open, and the second attempt from Brown's Wood, and then over the border and into an open earth in Mr. Fernie's territory. It was a picturesque hunt, and with all the accompaniments of colour flashing through the trees and ringing notes of horn and hound and shrill hollows that make up a woodland day, and now and then, when the ground served, we were able to ride alongside the pack and watch them tearing through the undergrowth after their fox—surely one of the prettiest of sights to a hunting man. There were plenty of foxes in evidence, but the above is enough to write of a woodland day. If, however, we hoped for a better day with the Belvoir from Three Queens on Wednesday, we were doomed to disappointment. The light, heathy soil did not carry a scent; it seldom does nowadays. A belt of firs was the scene of a pretty find, and for a few moments hounds ran hard, or rather as if they were going to run hard; when they wavered, Capell caught hold of the pack and cast them straight over a road-way—a good thought quickly acted on. Once across the road hounds literally flung themselves on the line, and with the music of their clan the Belvoir hounds raced over the pastures. A railway in course of construction soon checked them, but not for long, for another clever cast put matters right. Now it was close hunting, nay, more, pushing out a line, over plough. Gunby Warren is always a very hollow covert, and here the fox, no doubt, found a refuge.

On the same day the Pytchley had a smart gallop from Crick to Hillmorton (over the best of the Warwickshire) on to Dunsmore and back. "This was across some of the most level grass country in the world, no hills to baffle men

and the horses before their time, as in the Quorn and Cottesmore. Why do not you come and stay?" writes my friend. So I could if it was not for the— But, never mind. Let us pass on to the day which is to be my last in the Shires, if the Bicester may be said to be in the Shires, and if good foxes, good company, and good sport are qualifications, it certainly is equal with the best. Thursday, the morrow of the Oxford and Cambridge point-to-point, found the pack at Twyford hunting a fox from Mr. Clark's stick heap. The fox ran over what in Oxford days we used to consider the Tuesday country, over some of the stiff fences, but nothing a stout and bold horse could not get over. (His late master, now in the Imperial Yeomanry, gave him an excellent character.) Some three miles or so brought us close to the Kennels, and so on to Cotmore (where there have been many good runs in days gone by). The fox ran another three miles, nearly to Bicester, and then turned back right up to Bucknell. Thence they hunted on towards Cotmore, I think, but visits only occasional in the last twenty years make my geography not so accurate as it used to be.

It is one of the signs of a closing season when one reads of point-to-points. The Inter-University was won for Oxford by one of the rowing, riding, polo-playing family of Nickalls. The Belvoir and Blankney are to have a joint meeting, and last, but not least, the Bar Point-to-point will be held in the Harrow country next month. The entries close on March 31st, to W. W. Grantham, 6, Crown Office Row, Temple, at or before 1 p.m. There are three races—a heavy and light-weight race for Mr. Yerburgh's Challenge Cup, for practising barristers, and an open race, for members of any of the Inns of Court, for the Lockwood Challenge Cup. The races will be held on April 7th, 1900. This is, it is needless to say, one of the pleasantest meetings of the year, and is always looked forward to by those who have the luck to go. X.



WE have often read or heard of dreams of horses winning races which have come true. Nearly always I think, however, the stories are told after the event. As I have had a singularly clear dream about the Grand National, I will write it down here. It would be curious in more ways than one if it came true. Of course, I have been talking and thinking a great deal about the race. I may add, perhaps, that I have no bets. The dream was as follows: I thought I was standing in the enclosure at Liverpool. The finish was taking place, but I could not see. Someone said, "Here comes the winner," and as the crowd opened a grey horse was led through, a good deal blown and splashed. There is only one grey horse in the race—Grey-stone II. I may say, however, that my views on the probable result are not the least altered by the dream. I still expect to see Romanoff the winner, and Hidden Mystery not far off. I still think the task beyond Manifesto's powers, and that the weight is rather above Ambush II.'s ability to carry. The trainers of the latter are said to be very confident, and no horse has been more steady in the market. The reason I think Romanoff will win is that he is fit, he is a particularly clever jumper, and looks like staying every yard of the distance, and last, but not least, Dollery will ride him. Hidden Mystery has been trained by winning races "sweated for t' brass," as old John Scott used to say, and there is no better way. I cannot forget, however, those two ominous blunders at the finish of the race at Hurst Park.

One thing is tolerably certain, that if Hidden Mystery lands on the flat anywhere near the leaders his fine turn of speed should give him the race. Should anyone read these lines on his or her way to the Grand National, Romanoff and Hidden Mystery would be my suggestions for the little flutter which many people, who do not bet at other times, generally indulge in on the occasion of such national festivals as the Derby or the "Liverpool."

With that great event will close one of the most unsatisfactory seasons under Grand National Rules I can remember. The decadence of steeplechasing and hurdle racing, as evidenced by the unchecked scandals which are notorious and seen by everyone except the authorities, has been very rapid. As a medium of gambling a dog race is better and safer, and an East End trotting match more respectable. The case of Cracky, to take one instance among many, as well as the charges and countercharges of boring and hustling which have been bandied about, may perhaps convince the Grand National Committee that reforms are needed. The fact is that stewards of meetings are generally either weak, ignorant, or corrupt, and sometimes all three combined. Occasionally they are not even present. My own feeling is that all racing should be under the control of the Jockey Club, with special stewards for steeplechasing and hurdle racing. There is no advantage in the dual government of racing, and the present system has proved a failure.

On Monday we began our regular season, and flat racing, though far from perfect, is still a national sport in which we can join without losing caste. My readers will have noted that Damocles, which was my original fancy, has come to the front in the quotations for the Lincolnshire. Writing as I do before the race, I do not fancy his chance much now. His trainer believes in him, but, after all, so early in the season trainers know very little more than outsiders. I see a great deal is being written about working horses by the clock. I should like, as one who has trained a few winners in the East by the clock, to say that I believe that it gives one a very good idea of a horse's form. In India, for example, the time which a horse ought to take covering a certain distance is known, and the differences in timing, as courses are fast or slow, are taken into account. I am inclined to think that the trial against the clock is far less likely to upset a horse than racing him against another. I am sure that more races are lost by injudicious trials than from any other cause, except, of course, that of a horse not being fast enough. For example, I had a very fast but rather jady mare that won a number of races. Had I tried her with another the race would have been discounted. She was tried over the distance against the clock with another to bring her along, which, however, was always pulled back some lengths from the winning post. Some horses are extraordinarily consistent in their timing. I once bought a horse and entered him for a six-furlong race. He was tried against the clock, and did the distance in such good time that I doubted. I waited some days and tried him again. The time was exactly the same to a fraction. A few days

later he was started in the race, which he ran and won in almost the same time. So he always proved himself a most consistent horse. The clock, however, will tell you nothing about the probable result of a false run race, and that is why the American jockeys and the clock are coming in together. The secret of the success of the Americans lies in the fact that on their system races are run much more truly. Anyone can see that a trial by the clock of a horse galloped out from end to end will not tell you much about a race of which half is run at a canter and the rest at a frantic scurry. I do not believe the position has much to do with the matter, and in actual horsemanship our jockeys are (the best of them) superior to all others. It is a pleasure to me to write these lines, because I have often suggested that in certain circumstances the clock was not bad trying tackle, and

been scoffed at. Now trainers and owners will see that the watch is very useful.

I have dwelt on this because there will be little space for outside topics of interest after this week. There is another point on which I should like to say a word. I noted with approval your remarks that the departure of Flying Fox, though sentimentally to be regretted, was not nearly so great a misfortune as the drainage of mares by foreign purchasers. This has been taken up by the sporting Press, and one writer asks for legislation to forbid the exportation of mares. This is going rather far, but it is certainly a good and patriotic action to keep good mares in this country. It is patriotic, and it is also profitable, which in the end may prove more effectual in this as in many other matters.

VEDETTE.

RINGED PLOVER.

AT that very beautiful and interesting place, the Natural History Museum in South Kensington, the intelligent observer may have some pleasure in contemplating not only the record of bird and animal life so marvellously preserved in the stuffed specimens and glass cases, but may also observe the human document presented to him by those who study them. The comments of the British Cockney on the various subjects are worth almost as much attention as the subjects themselves.

Now there is a certain case—or even more than one—in that left-hand room as you go in, where the stuffed birds are, that is a special “draw” for his appreciative criticism. Pater-familias, with his little troop in tow, will commonly approach it with the remark, “My eye! nothing in this one, then. Suppose the specimen got the moth or something.” Then he passes on to the next case. So, too, one or two little families. Then comes one rather more lynx-eyed than the others, and “Oh, pa,” one of the children calls out, “just look at these two little eggs down on the ground!” So the family stops to look and to admire, and presently there is a little view-holoo set up from the other side of the case. “Oh, pa, here’s a pair of two teeny weeny little birds!”

And so there is. In the one place there is a pair of eggs of one of the above birds, in another part there is a pair of the young birds of the same kind. But both eggs and young birds are so extraordinarily alike, in their irregular mottlings and brandings, to the gravel amid which they lie, that three out of every four of the spectators who come to the case which contains them pass on with mouth and eyes agape and never see them at all. The whole little drama is interesting, for it is an object-lesson, as the saying is, in one of the devices of Nature for the protection of her children. It is all an excellent example of the protective effect of colouring that makes creatures almost indistinguishable from the surroundings in which they live. Even the grown ringed plover have a wonderful way of hiding themselves on a bare sandy beach. You may have marked the little flock down, and may walk about through the midst of it, but be unable to see a single member of it till one by one they rise up and scud over the sand. Thus it is, we are told, that so great a thing as an elephant will stand motionless and invisible in the grey shade of the forest, with which the colour of his great carcase harmonises so well. And again it is thus that the gaudy tiger, with his stripes, is not to be seen in the jungle of the tropics, and the scarcely less gaily-striped zebra is almost invisible against a background of the desert sand. We are here in the presence of one of the most valuable of Nature’s means for aiding survival of the fittest, and so for evolving the most fit. The eggs that are here shown are those of the ringed plover, the bird that the common parlance of our long-shore dwellers more often terms sandpipers, or perhaps dotterel. But these names are not correct. It is the bird that we see flying in flocks, sometimes of great numbers, and often with members of the golden plover, the sandpiper, dotterel, dunlin, and all that crew, even also of the starling tribe, mixed up with it. They love the flat places at the rivers’ estuaries, running nimbly over the mud, poking their bills into it, often in company with a host of starlings. Then, when they rise, with a little preliminary run and a shrill piping call, the whole flock displays wonderful evolutions in the air, now scarcely visible, as dark backs are turned towards the spectator, again flashing into sight like a gleam of silver as they turn their white-hued breasts and underparts. Round and round you they will wheel, as if all their move-

ments were done with military exactness by command. Often—going on a day of showers and bright intervals by the seaside—one may have seen the dark surface of a distant storm-cloud suddenly spangled with a splash of silver, that as suddenly disappeared again. This means that a flock of dunlin and ringed plover has been crossing between you and the cloud, and suddenly turning white breasts towards you, as the sunlight strikes them on the hither side of the cloud, has flashed into vivid view, then, as dark backs are turned again, has as suddenly disappeared. It is a curious and memorable sight.

When the birds are going in these flocks—that is to say, in the autumnal and winter seasons—they will be shy enough. The long-shore gunner does not find them easy stalking, and pity it would be if he did, for a shot into the flocks will kill numbers of the pretty little birds, that fall as easily as snipe. They are good enough of flavour, too, perhaps not quite as good as snipe, but if they were presented to one on table, and one were told they were a short-billed kind of snipe, one very likely would not know the difference. In our boyhood’s days we used to kill numbers of these birds, and they seemed more delicious than any dainty dish that ever was set before a king; but then it was we that had killed them, and that went for a great deal. But it was not by stalking them, as a rule, that we could get within gunshot range. More often it was by lying in wait until they flew over, when a shot “into the brown” would decimate them to our joy. But in the nesting-time these birds, like so many others, change their ways and their very nature, as it would seem, altogether, going in pairs, and becoming tame and trustful. Then, as one rouses them from their nests, they will fly up and continue to fly round, both male and female—for neither seem to go far from the nest—uttering cries of alarm, sometimes feigning



RINGED PLOVER'S NEST.

lameness, like the green plover, and so showing signs of distress that attract attention to their breeding ground much more forcibly than if they did not make such a fuss about it all. Yet even so it is almost impossible to find eggs or young, so closely do they assimilate to the ground. Seebohm tells us of finding their nests by watching the operations of a hen-harrier who was going over their nesting ground, hawking for them; but it is not so common a thing to see a hen-harrier. The ringed plover make no nest at all, such as might be an aid to its discovery, just scraping a saucer-like indentation in the pebbles and laying two, less often three, eggs. They appear to bring up

but one family a year, but if the first nest be harried, they, like so many others, will lay again and persevere in their intentions of aiding the population. Even during this time of breeding the pair of parent birds will sometimes seek the society of other old pairs breeding in their neighbourhood until the young birds are fairly able to shift for themselves and join them. The children begin to run about within a few days from the egg, always ready to crouch down and protect themselves by the help of that

plumage so wonderfully assimilating with the gravels and pebbly beach among which they live, while the parents keep up a perpetual clamour overhead on the approach of danger. When the autumn comes and the family is fully grown, both parents and young begin to show habits of wider sociability, and the birds mingle with the flocks of dunlin and other sandpipers, in whose company they will frequent the seashore and estuaries all the winter through.



AT THE THEATRE

THE interesting revival by the Benson Company of "Twelfth Night" at the Lyceum is graced by the virtues and marred by the defects characteristic, so far, of the representation of all the plays in their repertoire. It is praiseworthy for its earnestness of "attack,"

as the musicians would say, for the excellence and spirit of the acting and elocution of many of the members of the company; it is blameworthy because of the lack of poetical spirit restraining its vigour and lending a glamour to it, and because Mr. and Mrs. Benson are not quite equal to the task of interpreting a Shakespearean hero and heroine.

Mr. William Archer, joining in the chorus of those who write really earnestly about the drama, cites the case of the Benson Company as a flagrant example of the evils of actor-management, inasmuch as Mr. Benson takes leading position, not because of talent, but because he happens to be the director of the enterprise. Mr. Archer is quite right.

Mr. Benson's Malvolio is better than his Hamlet, his Henry V., his Captain Absolute, and so on, because, while it has all the faults of elocution, and a great deal of the monotony associated with his assumption of these characters during his tenancy of the Lyceum, it is more a piece of acting than a mere recitation. Mr. Benson seems to have thought out the character of Malvolio, to have some settled ideas as to his idiosyncrasies and motives, although in many instances, we think, he has arrived at a wrong conclusion regarding them; still, to find evidence of thought and settled purpose is much. He treated the part as a farcical one and thereby lost much of its meaning. Mrs. Benson is absolutely unfitted for the character of Viola—more need not be said. Miss Lily Brayton was, as usual, altogether admirable as the Countess; Mr. Lyall Swete a thoroughly satisfactory Aguecheek; Mr. Oscar Asche a fine Antonio; Mr. Weir a capital and artistic Sir Toby; Mr. Rodney not quite so acceptable as heretofore as the Clown; Miss Kitty Loftus sprightly and pleasing as Maria, although more than a little modern.

The play is staged with care and reverence, but without delicacy or lightness of touch. Shakespeare is not all tragedy, Mr. Benson.

THE reason for the success of such entertainments as "Florodora" is not far to seek. They are part of the "spirit of the age." They are as flimsy as gauze; they pass the pleasant hour away; the intellect may go to sleep while the eye and ear are titillated by pleasant melodies and pretty faces. If the author provides bright lines and an amusing story, so much the better, but they are not indispensable. Lilted music and dainty women form the mainstay of "Florodora" and the rest of its class.

Mr. Leslie Stuart's music at the Lyric Theatre is the very thing. It improves on a second hearing, and there are pretty faces in plenty. The "plot" is too silly for words, which proves the contention; but, silly as it is, it requires a "knack" in the writing, and this knack Mr. Owen Hall possesses to a high degree. With the exception of the remarkably stupid episode which makes the end of the play—the pantomime ghost business—the story ambles along in an entertaining way, and nothing more is required of it. The dialogue has just that strain of

superficial smartness which pleases the class of audience to which it appeals, the lesser "smart set," which has no use for real wit; it would be caviare, and anything more sterling would be voted a bore.

Many alterations have been made in the piece, to which the journalists were again invited the other evening. Miss Ada Reeve returns to the cast after a long absence, and the essentially French methods she brings to bear are of much value. Success has spoiled Miss Reeve to some extent; she is too sure of herself; she is too given to winking at her audience; but she is, nevertheless, so sprightly, there is such meaning in everything she says and does, there is so much devilment in each movement and each inflexion of the voice, that the position she has achieved for herself is quite understandable and thoroughly deserved. Mr. Louis Bradfield has now joined the company, and brings to the Lyric the spryness and assurance of the Gaiety, where actors and actresses are almost at one with the audience, hardly divided from them by the row of footlights. Mr. Bradfield, despite the little tricks, contortions, and mannerisms which have now become set and fixed, is a pleasant figure on the stage, alert, easy, mercurial. No daintier and more winsome, graceful and refined a personality than that of Miss Kate Cutler is to be found upon the stage. She, as did Miss Ellaline Terriss, seems apart from the gaudiness and the glitter of her surroundings, and lends an air of sweetness and fragrance to performances which, with all their brilliancy, are not remarkable for either of these gentler qualities.

Several new songs have been added, all to the general advantage, for Mr. Stuart's numbers are as melodious as ever. These, added to the rich humour of Mr. Willie Edouin, make "Florodora" the very thing for the tired mind. The genuine humour of Mr. Edouin shines all the brighter in contrast with the forced jokes of Mr. Stevens, who brings to "musical comedy" the methods of provincial pantomime.

MR. HENRY ARTHUR JONES, in his new comedy for Mr. Charles Frohman, to be produced in the autumn at the Duke of York's Theatre, returns to his manner of "The Liars," albeit we are told that his new piece is of stronger "dramatic fibre," and its argument is evolved by means of a larger distribution of characters. We shall welcome a new comedy from Mr. Jones, especially if it does not deal with mentally unfaithful wives and weak-kneed heroes, with a tendency towards neuroticism. In these martial days we should have no room for effeminacy, which is the dominating trait of most of our recent English comedies. Wit and embroglio can be deduced from other theses. No doubt Mr. Jones, keen observer that he is, has felt this in the manufacture of his latest play, to which we look forward with the eagerness due to one of the foremost of modern English playwrights.

We prefer not to touch, however lightly, upon the production of a piece called "Nurse" at the Globe Theatre. It is essentially nasty in idea and execution, and its nastiness has not even the poor excuse of wit, humour, or skill.

More than usual interest attaches to the production by Mrs. Patrick Campbell, at the Royalty Theatre, of "The Fantastiks," a translation, by "George Fleming," of M. Rostand's "Les Romanesques," which has not been seen in this country hitherto. For one thing, the play is the work of the author of the finest romantic play of modern times, "Cyrano de Bergerac"; for another, its adaptor is a distinguished literary woman; for a third, Mrs. Patrick Campbell promises to appear as the hero, a romantic youth; and for a fourth, and most important, the story seems to promise much amusement and entertainment.

"Les Romanesques" has for plot an inversion of the root idea of "Romeo and Juliet." The parents are near neighbours; the dearest wish of their hearts is for a union between their children. But, worldly wise, they are afraid that if



everything is made easy for the young people, if they know that they are parentally intended for each other, in all probability, with the contrariness of youth, they will cherish a dislike, instead of an affection, for each other. So the Montagues and Capulets, so to speak, pretend to be at daggers drawn; they assume a violent enmity; they pretend to put every obstacle in the course of true love. Their grounds are now divided by a high wall, and they gleefully watch the stolen interviews of the pair; they chuckle at the clandestine meetings over the garden wall while the moon is shining and the nightingale warbles. They even strike a bargain with a make-believe desperado to carry off the maiden in order that her lover may rescue her at the risk of his life.

And then, rather than break their children's hearts, rather than sever two young lives, they agree to clasp hands and forget their enmity. The Montagues and the Capulets "make it up," and the garden wall is razed to the ground. The young people are recognised lovers. But, the secrecy gone, the glamour of the thing disappears. The love affair to them grows humdrum, a coolness makes itself felt. The matter of the hired bravo comes out. There is a quarrel, and young Romeo goes out into the world. And the old fellows, from the failure of their plans, feel really embittered towards each other. A real quarrel looms on the horizon. The garden wall is built up again. In the end, Romeo returns, tired of the great world, and all ends happily. The story sounds delightful, and, told in the language at the command of M. Rostand, delightful it should be.

Our readers were among the earliest to learn of the unusual Easter season at Drury Lane Theatre, when a new romantic drama, "Marsac of Gascony," by an American actor and author, Mr. Vroom, will be produced. They have already been provided with a glimpse of the story in which the author will enact the character of the hero.

PHŒBUS.

A Giant Cactus.

OUR illustration depicts a giant cactus, the type of the natural order cactaceæ, which was recently discovered by the photographer, Mr. A. F. Messenger, a well-known view photographer of Phoenix, Arizona. This beautiful monster of the cactus family is still standing, although it is slowly rotting away and will soon fall. Mr. Messenger found it about eight miles south of Phoenix. It is about 40ft. high and of the form shown in our photograph.

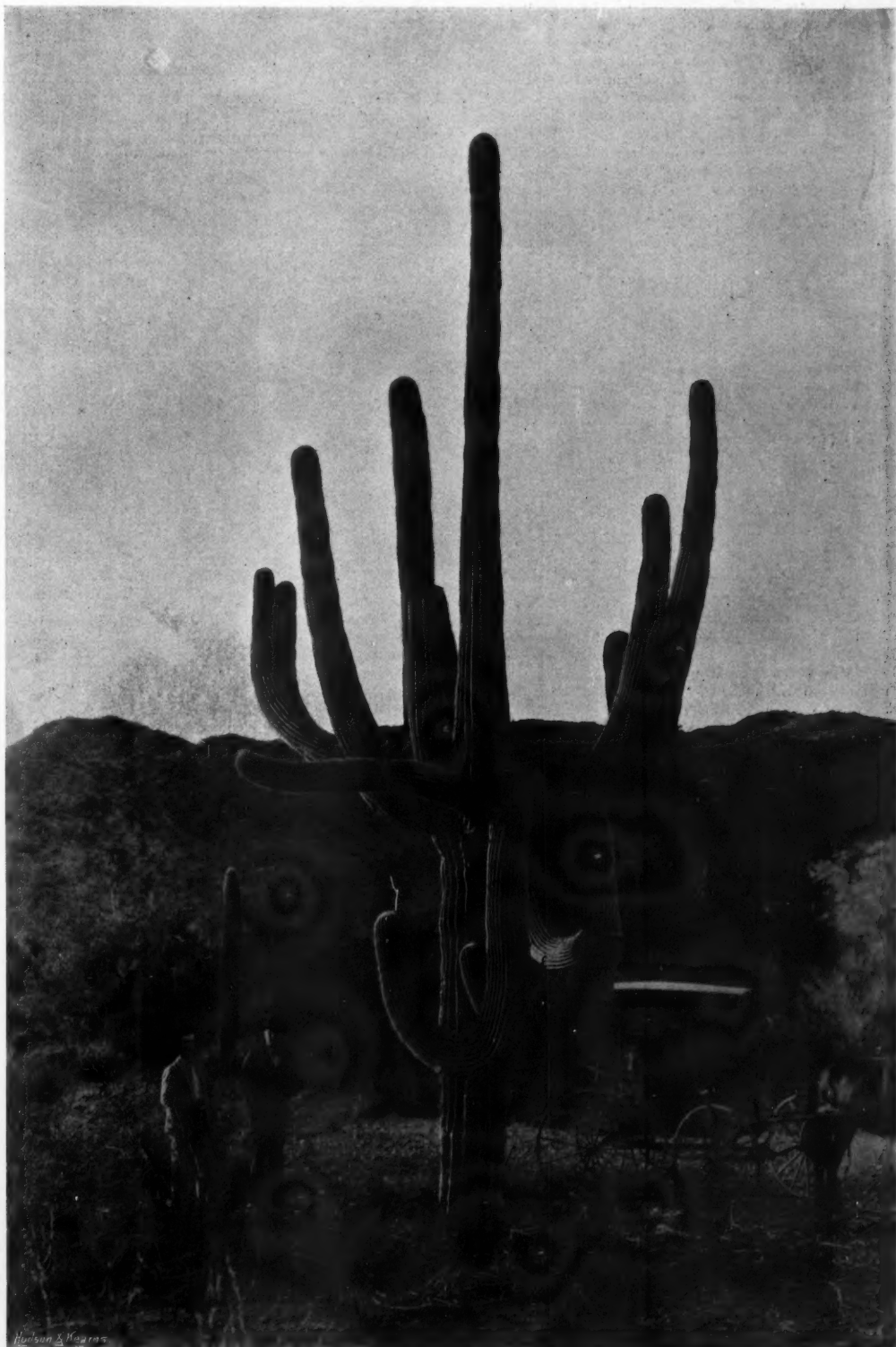
The cactus is, to many botanists, a wonderful and interesting plant. What the date palm is to the African deserts, so the giant cactus is to the parched plains of tropical America. The stems are usually leafless and fleshy, globular or columnar, and are armed with spines and bristles. There would seem to be no definite rule as to the structural growth of this curious plant, and in the hot stony places of tropical America some singularly grotesque specimens may be met with. The skin of the cactus is almost impenetrable, and encloses abundant juice, which undoubtedly enables the plant to thrive even in a very parched and stony soil. The natives of Mexico extract a drink from the cactus called "mescal," and the Indians also obtain a beverage from it. On the fruit of this botanical wonder the Papago Indians live for weeks at a time.

Literary Notes.

THE *Pall Mall Magazine* is always of a high order of merit, but two articles, or even three, in the April number are quite out of the way. The most startling of them is Mr. Benjamin H. Ridgely's essay giving the reasons why so many Americans live abroad, of which I had always imagined the chief one to be that the continent of Europe, with its venerable associations, was a far more pleasant place to live in than America, which is, after all, rather new. But that does not appear to be the whole reason or anything like it. In fact, the

main reason appears to be that personal journalism has attained to such a pitch in the United States that life has become absolutely intolerable to many Americans of quiet disposition.

Here is a very flagrant example of the effects which can be produced by literature at its worst, that is to say, by journalism gone wrong. An American, asked why he lived abroad, replied: "Simply because the extremes to which personal journalism is now being carried in the principal cities of the United States make individual freedom there out of the question. In spite of the fact that I held no public position, I could not turn around without finding some reference to myself or to some member of my family in one of the daily newspapers. I sat one night three years ago in a box at the opera, and the next day there was not only a flippant and mortifying reference to our little opera party in one of the newspapers, but portraits of my wife and daughters, and, further, suggestions that my daughters, owing to the fortune of their father, were worth the attention of a European nobleman who was then in the United States, and whose very name they were bold enough to mention. The publication was humiliating in the extreme, and I promptly expostulated with the editor, who was himself a gentleman and a member of good society. Yet he gave me to understand that he could not undertake to keep the names of people who showed themselves in public places out of the personal columns of his paper. There was no real scandal or libel in what was published on this occasion, or in various other references to my family that had been published before; they were simply an unwarrantable and abominable invasion of my privacy as a private citizen; and since there appeared to be no remedy for the imposition, my wife and I concluded that we would be freer and happier in Europe. Hence we closed



A WONDERFUL PLANT.

up our home and came abroad. But for the shame of our personal journalism, which, as I say, makes individual freedom of life or movement out of the question, I would return home to-morrow."

Things are not quite so bad as this in England, but they are approaching it in the columns of a newspaper which shall be nameless; and here, as in the United States, there is no remedy except that of personal violence. Now the misfortune of that is that the person aggrieved is not always the stronger man.

Among other notable articles in the same magazine is one on parodies generally by Mr. Henley, suggested by Mr. Owen Seaman in "Cap and Bells." It is true that there is next to no mention made of Mr. Owen Seaman in the course of the article, but it is a remarkably entertaining essay notwithstanding, and it shows great knowledge of the literature of parody. Mr. Baillie-Grohman has a curiously illustrated article on "Arts and Crafts in the Sixteenth Century," which may be read with great interest. The prints reproduced in this are from the *Nova Reperta* series of Stradanus.

Quite a week ago I wrote a review of Miss Mary Johnstone's "By Order of the Company," which will appear, no doubt, in the Editor's good time. I was very much struck by the power and strength of the book, and I was even doubtful whether I had not allowed myself to be carried away too far in admiration. However, it appears from the *Academy* that this novel raised the circulation of the *Atlantic Monthly* during its publication by 50,000 copies. That is what the publisher would like. Then the *Academy* writes: "This is one of the best historical novels we have read for a long time. Miss Johnstone can write, and she can re-create a period." That is what Miss Johnstone will like; for if ever I read a book instinct with the feeling of the literary artist it is "By Order of the Company." The *Academy* critic, by the way, is disappointed because the book ends happily. To many that will be a great recommendation, and the happiness seems to come in quite a credible way, albeit after risks.

Mr. Justin McCarthy is probably the most amiable and the most innocent old gentleman who ever held a violent creed in politics, but none the less it is necessary to fall foul of a recent pronouncement by him in the *North American Review*. He has dared to classify Charles Kingsley, Anthony Trollope, Charles Reade, and Charles Lever among "disappearing authors." Save in the case of Charles Reade, whose works, as those of a novelist with a purpose, are bound to lose popularity, I believe the phrase to be entirely inapplicable. Charles Kingsley's work may not be "grown up," but as long as there are boys Amyas Leigh, and Tom Thurnall, and the Norsemen in "Hypatia" will have an abiding charm. Lever, perhaps, is a trifle too rollicking for the present generation. But surely Anthony Trollope is not waning in popularity. The Barchester series and Orley farm are of the highest order of fiction.

Concerning this pronouncement by Mr. McCarthy, I should like to make one or two observations. Firstly, Mr. McCarthy's life has been such as to give him practically no chance of ascertaining what the world in general is reading. He has been almost from the beginning of time a member of Parliament, a leader writer on the *Daily News*, and an industrious historian. His opportunities of mixing in society have therefore been very few. Also, there is really no way in which one can test the popularity of an established author among persons of cultivated and refined intelligence. Full editions of Trollope, Lever, and Charles Kingsley are to be found in scores, hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands of private libraries. I myself have more than one complete set of the books of a novelist handed down to me from my forbears. Consequently, I have never had to buy them, and mine is merely a typical case. Then the children, as they grow up, are allowed far greater freedom in their choice of reading than was usual in days gone by, and they read their classics before they can fully understand them. But they read them all the same. Only there can never be in the case of a novelist of the past the same general enthusiasm as there was in the days gone by, when men and women of all ages were charmed at the same moment by the Wizard of the North. Just think of "Ivanhoe" as a new book!

It is really too lovely this story of M. Rostand, and the "King of Rome," and Master Lambton, and Sir Thomas Lawrence. M. Rostand seems to have mixed up his memories of two portraits by Sir Thomas Lawrence, one of the Duke of Reichstadt, one of Master Lambton. The confused memory was the inspiration which brought "L'Aiglon" into being; so that "the Napoleonic panache worn with ineffectual fervour," and a very striking play also, had its origin in a mistake of memory.

I have been favoured with a copy of the *Londoner*, which is a whole-hearted attempt to do for twopenny what sundry other reviews achieve for sixpence or threepence. It is a readable little paper, which has certainly got hold of some of the right men, notably Mr. Walter Herries Pollock, Sir Herbert Stephen, and Mr. W. J. Loche. Under the initials "C. L. G." lurks a well-known humourist who some day, perhaps, will let us have some of his verse.

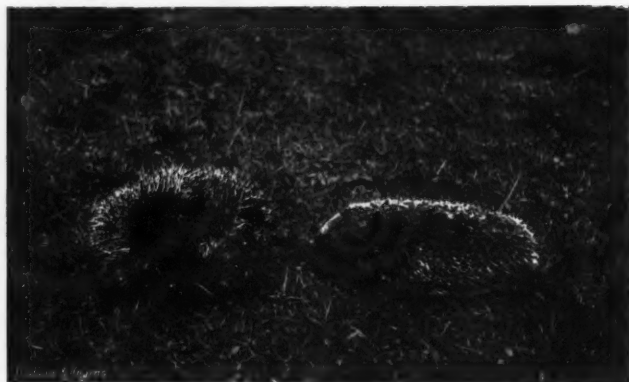
Books to order from the library:

"Pink and Scarlet." Lieutenant-Colonel E. A. H. Alderson. (Heinemann.)
 "The Rebel." H. B. Marriott Watson. (Heinemann.)
 "Chrystalla." Esme Stuart. (Methuen.)
 "Garthowen." Allen Raine. (Hutchinson.)
 "The Love of Parson Lord" (stories). Mary F. Wilkins. (Harpers.)
 LOOKER-ON.

The Hedgehog at Home.

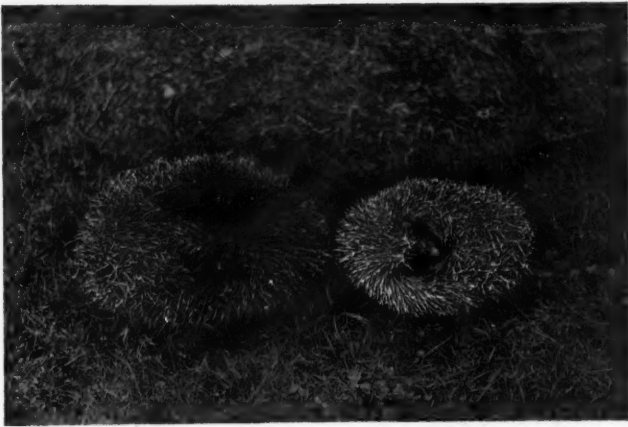
THE prickly urchin or grunter, to give him his Yorkshire names, is very common throughout the country; but he is persecuted on all sides, trapped and hunted with dogs, till, were it not for his shy and nocturnal habits, he would soon be as mythical as the sphinx and as rare as the dodo. Yet they are most interesting animals, though they do swarm with fleas. I have kept scores of them, and at one time I had over fifty in a large walled-in orchard. They had the free run of my hen-house, and I often used to find them coiled up in the stone nesting-boxes, yet they never touched eggs or chickens, though both were purposely put in their way, and the only harm I ever knew them do was to kill and eat the thighs of some large edible frogs (*R. esculenta*) that I had brought home from the continent. They used to hibernate under the straw covering a large strawberry bed, at the foot of big bushes of lavender, and under a summer-house. The hibernation of the hedgehog,

however, is by no means complete even in the hardest winters, as I have often marked their resting-place, a warm bunch of leaves in the bottom of a thick fence, and have found their tracks in the snow leading far away—these I have covered up, and on going the next morning have found fresh tracks, leading both from and up to the nest of leaves—showing that Mr. Hedgehog had been away on a foraging expedition during the night, though what he could find to eat when the snow has been several inches deep and hard frozen on the top has puzzled me somewhat; perhaps in such case he takes to berries that have fallen from the hedges and what he can pick up on the roads. All my experience of the hedgehog's egg and young bird destroying proclivities is absolutely negative. As already mentioned, I have kept dozens of them, and have often concealed myself in woods observing them, and have followed behind them in the meadows, watching them turn over the dung of sheep and cows with their noses, looking for beetles, and I never once have seen a hedgehog take an egg or a young bird; yet several of my friends, naturalists, sportsmen, and, as Paley has it, men of known probity and good sense, have told me that they have seen this happen, so that I am bound to believe it. About a year ago Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey recorded in the columns of the *Field* how he shot a partridge, and while waiting to pick it up till the other guns joined him a hedgehog came up and actually began to eat the bird. If I remember rightly, a photograph was taken of this interesting occurrence, but I would fain believe from my own experience that this vitiated taste is confined to the few, just as in the same way an odd squirrel will take to the evil habit of eating young birds and eggs; but it is hardly fair on this account to blame the whole race of hedgehogs and destroy them wholesale. I know that hedgehogs at times are a nuisance in this way, that where there are too many of them they will curl themselves up in the nests of pheasants and partridges, right on the top of the eggs, without breaking any of them, but frightening the old bird



WAKE UP!

away. I have known a hedgehog trapped by means of a pot egg, and it is a curious thing that such cunning rascals as rats, carrion crows, magpies, and jays are often lured to their doom by a similar device. One would have supposed that such crafty creatures would be able to detect fraud. I have found young hedgehogs in nearly every month during the summer. The earliest was more than half grown at the end of April, and the latest three-parts grown at the beginning of November. Personally, I have never found more than four young in a nest, and most of these have been situated in thick rough grass in fields and on commons, and in copes and hedge bottoms. I have in my collection a case containing two old ones and four young ones which a setter of mine "stood" one day in September. I expected a hare or a rabbit to get up, and was not a little surprised when nothing stirred, nor could I see a trace of fur or feather, but on rummaging about in front of my dog's nose, a proceeding which he seemed to consider contrary to all rules of the game, I came upon the nest, and the urchins took them home and stuffed them. It is extraordinary through what a very small hole a hedgehog can creep. I have lost many a one by not paying attention to the place in which they were put. Hedgehogs can swim well if they choose, but I never knew one take to the water of its own accord, but we often used to give our special pet hedgehogs a swim, and it helped to rid them of the parasites with which they swarm. They are often kept in kitchens to keep down the black-beetles or black-clocks, and though they will eat them readily enough, it is generally only when they can get nothing else. A donkey is supposed by some people to be very partial to thistles, but he is not such a fool as to eat them when better provender is to be had, and so with the hedgehog and black-beetles. The animals themselves are eaten by foxes and rats, and also by gipsies. I remember a gipsy once showing me a cooked hedgehog which had been baked in clay, and I have often regretted since that I did not taste a bit, as he assured me that they are most toothsome. Varieties are very



CURLED UP TIGHTLY.

rare amongst these animals. I have only heard of one in the county of Yorkshire, and that was a white one, which was obtained a few years ago by a gamekeeper at Easingwold. They are often nailed up when dead on doors and walls to keep the witches away, and also for the horses, cattle, and pigs to rub themselves against. In most districts they are still believed to suck the cows regularly, but in spite of most careful enquiries I hold this at present to be not proven. That they are very fond of milk I admit, but I do not think it likely that a cow would allow them to help themselves unless she were in great extremity from an over-distended udder. I should very much like to catch one *flagrante delicto*, so as to clear up this vexed question, which is on a par with the one as to whether the female adder or viper ever allows her young ones to creep down her throat on the appearance of sudden danger. There is also a belief in certain districts, as there was in the days of Pliny, that hedgehogs climb up apple trees, shake off the apples, roll down upon them, and walk off with the same stuck fast to their spines, and only last autumn a man assured me that one night when smoking his pipe in the dusk outside his house he heard a noise in one of his apple trees, and on going to enquire the reason a hedgehog rolled down at his feet and scuttled off. That hedgehogs can climb some trees I have had ocular proof, for on a bright moonlight night I have watched them clamber up trees nailed against a wall, helping themselves along considerably by means of their long sharp claws, and to anyone accustomed to look upon them as sluggish animals spending most of their time rolled up in ball their agility would have appeared marvellous. Some dogs seem to take a special delight in routing out hedgehogs. Several terriers that I have had were always on their track, though I never allowed them to kill one if I could prevent it, and a retriever I once had often used to bring them to me to look at; he never hurt them, but seemed to take a special delight in carrying them about.

It is not often that one gets a chance of hearing the voice of the hedgehog: it is a kind of cross between a whine and a grunt, hence one of its local names—grunter; but on one occasion, on going down to look at my hedgehogs on a moonlight night, I was startled by the most dreadful screams, something like those of a wounded hare, but less in volume and intensity. I found the noise proceeded from an unfortunate animal which had evidently been mauled by a dog, and I was compelled to put it out of its misery.

OXLEY GRABHAM.



HOLLIES BARKED BY RABBITS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have a small warren on my estate in Sussex. In the winter of 1898 the rabbits barked most of the hollies, some right round the trunk. Since then I have protected the hollies with wire netting. Will they die? Should I cut them down so as to let them shoot up again? At present they do not appear to be much, if at all, the worse. This year the rabbits have been busy with the undergrowth, barking and cutting the young shoots. Should I cut out the undergrowth which is injured? I do not want it to die. The fact is, I ought to have fed the rabbits and killed them off before Christmas. All my usual guns, however, were shooting bigger game, *i.e.*, Boers. Any advice will be gratefully received by—A. H. R.

[As the hollies were barked by the rabbits during the winter of 1898, and the plants up till now appear to be little, if any, the worse, it is probable

that those which seemed to be barked right round were only partially so (some of the inner bark having escaped), in which case Nature is busily repairing the damage. Your plants are not likely to die from the effects, otherwise it would have been manifest last summer and the leaves would have shrivelled up. Such being the case, no cutting down is necessary, the pruning required being to cut out any portions (if such exist) that are absolutely dead, which will be shown by the shrivelling up of the leaves. Concerning the undergrowth, much the same applies, the better way being to leave the plants alone until the growing season advances, when the extent of the injury will be at once apparent, and all dead portions can be cut out, leaving the stools to break up again. Any that fail to grow will before winter show that they are quite dead, and during the dormant season the vacant places may be made good by planting others in their stead.—ED.]

WEIGELA EVA RATHKE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I should be much obliged if you would tell me whether Weigela Eva Rathke ever grows as freely as Weigela rosea and other Weigelas, or is it always a dwarf shrub, which it appears to be here? If you would be so kind as to answer in COUNTRY LIFE I should be grateful.—FOX.

[Weigela Eva Rathke is considerably less vigorous in growth than W. rosea and many other varieties, but at the same time it can hardly be called dwarf, as bushes from 4ft. to 5ft. high may be met with. The branches are more slender than those of W. rosea. The great feature of the variety Eva Rathke is that it will flower more or less continuously throughout the summer, and in August it is often thickly studded with bright-coloured flowers.—ED.]

TYRANT AND SLAVE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—At your request I send you a few particulars of my dogs, a photograph of which Messrs. Byrne, of Richmond, sent you with a view to your publishing. I fear there is nothing much one can say about them but that they are great



friends as long as Beauty, the bulldog, allows Flossie, the Yorkshire, to have it all her own way. She takes his food, and chases and bites him with impunity. He dare not go near her food. He always is at hand to back her up when she rushes off to "greet" anyone who may ring a bell. Beggars very seldom call here twice, tramps never. The village children play with the bulldog when they get the chance, he is so gentle (until upset), but they consider the Yorkshire a fiend. He weighs 48lb.; she, 3lb. 13oz.—D. H.

SHIPTON COURT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have only just seen your admirable article, with effective illustrations of Shipton Court. Permit me to correct two errors. First, I regret to say this ancient mansion is not, as you state, the seat of Sir George Compton Reade, who was dispossessed under the will of Sir John Chandos Reade, the seventh Baronet of the third creation. Secondly, Shipton Court was purchased by Sir Compton Reade, not as you say in 1673, but in 1663. The vendor was a connection, Sir Rowland Lacey, and Sir Compton's two seats in Berks had been destroyed in the Civil War. King Charles II. granted him licence to reside outside the county of Berks, because he had no suitable residence, in the same year 1663, he being High Sheriff. Up till 1856, when Wychwood was disafforested, the owner of Shipton Court had the right of two bucks annually. As you state, there are monuments to eight Baronets of this line in Shipton Church. Sir George Compton Reade, a gentleman of the highest character, and an earnest advocate of temperance, is, alas, a stranger in a strange land.—COMPTON READE.

[The first and more serious error we had corrected before.—ED.]

A RECORD LEAP.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I take the liberty to enclose a photograph which I am sure will interest your hunting readers, whose name is legion, and those who give the "sport of kings" the warmest corner in their hearts. A whip (one of the good game class of men who "never enlisted," but who daily perform deeds of valour richly deserving of the Victoria Cross in the hunting field) of the North Warwickshire Foxhounds being pressed for time, jumped—or rather tobogganed in this case!—his hunter down the flight of stone steps, from the wicket-gate to the road, when hounds were in full cry. The steepness and narrowness of these stone steps may be judged from the position of the small dog seated on a lower step. Great praise is due to the noble and generous horse, which carried its

rider safely out of such a tight place; but it is hard to set a limit on the capabilities of man's best friend. This feat (performed in the nineties) is a historical one, and the steps (which are situated on the left-hand side of the main road between Kenilworth and Leamington) are pointed out to visitors to the district. The uniqueness of the jump induced me to get the place photographed specially for your valuable paper, so please accept it with my best wishes for "good luck." May the stock of men and horses of the hunting fields of Old England long, long continue to prosper and flourish.

"Far distant the day, in the ages to come,
When the gorse is uprooted, the foxhound is dumb!"

—ARTHUR LAWSON.

RIFLE CLUBS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Your excellent article on above is much to the point. National rifle shooting is imperative, and must come. Short-range clubs are the only possible means by which the masses can acquire skill. There is much difference of opinion at present as to details of rifle clubs. As an old Volunteer officer and rifle shot, I would point out some most necessary conditions which all short-range clubs must observe if they pretend to exist as an aid to national defence. A rifle of equal weight and with the same pull-off as the Service weapon must be used. (Shooting with light sporting arms, pulling off at about 3lb., is a pleasant amusement enough, but is practically useless as a training for the Service rifle.) All shooting should be with the back sight raised, to make young shots realise the necessity of keeping the sights upright (the great difficulty at extreme ranges). As Lord Lansdowne advances no hope that the Government will find rifles, the cheapest way to start clubs of practical utility seems to me to be thus: Obtain an easily accessible range of 100 yds.; make this absolutely safe with screens; buy M.H. Service rifles or carbines, which are now to be had cheap; fit them with Morris tubes, thus getting ammunition at 2s. 9d. a hundred; insist on all shooting being carried out standing, with sight flap raised; decide on dimensions of bull's-eye, etc., for all such ranges, that inter-club matches might excite interest. I am convinced that such nursery clubs would prove a real help to the Volunteers, and would provide a large number of fire-trained recruits anxious to try their skill at longer distances. Civilian shooting on Volunteer open ranges should at the same time be discouraged; to obtain this privilege let them be sworn in.—LEONARD HAYWARD.

TENDER PLANTS FOR WALLS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I should be very pleased for some information I have long desired to obtain, and as I notice that in your gardening notes you ask those in difficulties about their gardens to apply for advice, I venture to do so. Well, I have purchased an old house, at one time belonging to a monastery, and there is a beautiful old buttressed wall which I want to clothe with climbers and shrubby plants at the base. When at Battle Abbey some time ago I was interested in the plants on the walls, some quite shrubby climbers, if I am using the correct botanical term. About twenty kinds would suffice; situation Devon, soil light and warm.—ASHRIDGE.

It is not often that a correspondent desires plants entirely suitable for his climate and soil, but "Ashridge" is thus happily placed. The kinds he desires are the ones we should have recommended for this position. We will take first the shrubby kinds, those more for the base of the wall; but one never knows how a plant will behave when in a position agreeable to it. Sometimes it will throw off its bushy habit and become a veritable climber, running over the top of the wall, a bower of foliage and, in the appointed season, flowers also. Of the shrubby section, choose *Aloisia citrodora* (the sweet verberna, or lemon plant), which has light green leaves which when bruised or brushed against give off a grateful lemon fragrance; *Camellias*; *Ceanothus azureus*, with its beautiful blue flowers, and the variety *Gloire de Versailles*; *Choisya ternata*, the Mexican orange-flower, which is sure to succeed—its flowers are white and in clusters, and the popular name was given on account of its fragrance suggesting orange blossom; *Edwardsia grandiflora*; *Fuchsia globosa*, *F. Riccartoni*, and other good bushy, hardy kinds; *Kerria japonica* fl. pl.; the double Jew's mallow, which, however, is thoroughly hardy—its double orange flowers are produced in profusion in the early summer. The pomegranate (*Punica*) you may try, *Eucalyptus macrantha*, *Pyrus japonica*, or *Cydonia japonica*, and its varieties. This is a glorious wall plant even in winter, as when



Hudson & Parsons

the weather is quite mild it opens its scarlet flowers. *Knaphill Scarlet* is the deepest in colour, but there are many varieties. *Rubus deliciosus*, a charming white flower, very distinct; *Solanum crispum*, but in a very sheltered corner, giving protection in winter; and *Wistaria sinensis*, also its white variety. Of course of true climbers there is no want. Roses will have first consideration. Plant the old Monthly China rose; the more tender climbers, *l'Idéal*, *Gustave Regis*, and even *Maréchal Niel*, you can experiment with, as your climate is so exceptionally mild. The ampelopsis (*Vitis*) must be kept within bounds. Such a wall as yours should be for rarer kinds, but whilst mentioning the ampelopsis, the true vines, with which they are now grouped, must not be lightly passed over. *Vitis Coignetiae*, *V. Labrusca*, and the turquoise-berried *V. heterophylla humulifolia* should certainly be planted. The handsome leaves of the first-named in particular turn to brilliant colours in the autumn. *Aristolochia Siphon* (the Dutchman's pipe) is worth planting for its foliage alone; *Bignonia radicans*, *Calystegia pubescens* fl. pl., the deliciously fragrant winter-flowering *Chimonanthus fragrans grandiflorus*, clematises in variety, not omitting the winter-flowering *C. calycina*, *Eccremocarpus scaber*, *Hallitza tannoides*, a vigorous hop-like plant which should be more seen in English gardens; the new *Polygonum baldschuanicum*, of which notes have appeared lately in *COUNTRY LIFE*; *Jasminum nudiflorum*, for its flowers in winter; the white sweet-scented jasmine, honeysuckles, and the passion-flower. This list contains more than twenty names, so you must select those you think you would care to plant. If you plant at once and give water freely during the first summer, they will soon become established.—ED.]

LABOURERS' COTTAGES.

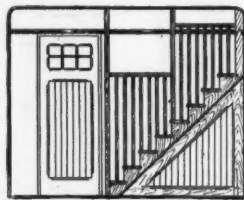
[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Seeing the plans of cottages published in your paper, I beg to enclose plans and elevations of a block of four cottages proposed to be erected at Colnbrook for Alex. Bowie, Esq., M.D. I heartily agree with Mr. Eden that it is very important to have the elevations artistic and suitable to the surrounding country. At the same time, it is quite as important to have the interior arrangement good and healthy. In Mr. Eden's cottages the ladders open directly into the kitchen, and are, seemingly, only constructed of boarding. It would be extremely difficult in warm weather to keep the food in good condition in these ladders. The stairs, too, are most objectionable, and if constructed as shown would probably lead to many a broken limb. Winders are always objectionable, but they can seldom be entirely avoided in cottages. When, however, you get a flight of eight winders on a staircase where, apparently, there would be pitch darkness, it is a very serious matter. The latter part of this remark also applies to Mr. Wood's plan. The enclosed cottages are to be tiled (of a dark red colour), the walls faced with rough-cast (white), the interior woodwork to be stained green, and the exterior woodwork painted the same colour. The stairs are rather a novel feature of the design. They start direct from, and are open to, the living-room. I enclose sketch to show the arrangement. These stairs are thus thoroughly well lighted at night-time as well as during

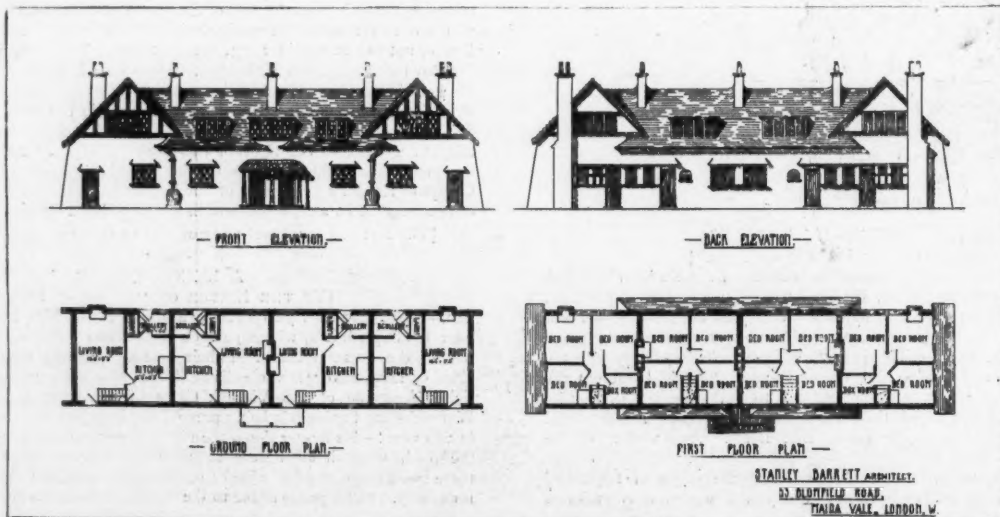
the day, and there is a window on the first floor for ventilation. The kitchens have portable stoves, which are more cleanly than the ordinary cottage kitchen. The height of the rooms is 7ft. 6in. on the ground floor, and 8ft. on the first floor. The size of the living-room is 16ft. 6in. by 9ft. 3in.; the kitchen is 12ft. 3in. by 8ft. 3in. The ground floor rooms have a picture rail which takes the place of a cornice, and the walls are whitewashed down to this level, making the rooms much lighter than they would otherwise be. Below the picture rail the plaster is coloured with a washable distemper. The larder and kitchen doors are so arranged that the former can only be opened when the kitchen door is closed. This prevents the heat from the kitchen entering the larder. The walls are 9in. thick, and by the use of rough-cast on the exterior and plaster on the interior the temperature of the rooms is kept

warm in winter and cool in summer. The builder's estimate is £150 for each cottage, i.e., £600 for the four. This amount would be reduced if a block of six were built. I shall be glad to give any of your readers who may be interested in the matter any other information they might like to know, and should be pleased to show them the original drawings if they would call at my office.—STANLEY BARRETT, 53, BLUMFIELD ROAD, MAIDA VALE, LONDON, W.

—DESIGN FOR STAIRS.—



STANLEY BARRETT, ARCHT.



STANLEY BARRETT ARCHT.
53 BLUMFIELD ROAD,
MAIDA VALE, LONDON, W.